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Thesis/Project

BUILDING SACRED SPACE FOR THE NEW MILLENNIUM

BY

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2000

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Introduction

This thesis reviews five specific examples of Unitarian Universalist¹ architecture in the past decade. A guiding question for my study of these buildings has been whether or not these worship spaces and churches reflect the identity of the religious communities they shelter. To begin with, I will provide a brief and general overview of the historical and contemporary contexts of these buildings. A brief history of Unitarian, Universalist, and Unitarian Universalist architecture provides an important window on the historical context of our churches. Another defining context of recently built churches is our current cultural and social milieu, or post-modernity. Apart from context, buildings are designed in accordance with a program intended uses. This includes corporate worship, religious education, and usually a wide range of other activities. The function of worship sets the church apart as a sacred space, and distinguishes the church building from other, similar buildings.

The context of postmodernism, in the 1990s and just beyond, has to do with the changing nature of the cultural landscape for a large part of the American population.

There have been substantial cultural changes in the last 10 years, not to mention the last 30, which have important implications for religious communities operating in this context. Postmodernism, for me, encompasses various degrees of disenchantment with science and pure reason combined with movement towards multi-culturalism, transnationalism, and information glut. Although widespread access to the internet is fairly new, it has rapidly entered the mainstream, especially among those segments of the population which tend to make up UU churches (mostly white, educated, uppermiddle class). Internet access speeds up commerce and accessibility of a wide range of

¹ Later abbreviated as UU.



information. There is an increasing demand for flexibility in everything, which might well be attributed to late 20th century capitalism, which brought an abundance of 24-hour stores, in addition to an increase in the number of jobs which demand work at all hours of the day and night. In the post-modern world, nothing is contained, and everything seems to spill out of its previously established boundaries.

The opening overview of some of the historical precedents for UU church architecture begins somewhat arbitrarily with the colonial congregational churches of New England and extends up to the middle of the 20th century. I will then review some of the available literature on church design and renovation, and how it relates to current church construction. I will also elaborate further on important terms used in the thesis, postmodernism, sacred space, and the Unitarian Universalist movement, or UU ism.

The central section will examine a few examples of recent church architecture in detail, including physical descriptions, photos, and drawings of the buildings in question, interviews with architects, ministers, and congregants, and an overview of the church. The churches that I studied were all in the Northeast, and located in suburbs of major cities, mostly in the Philadelphia area. My information on each church was gathered from site visits and conversations with church members and employees, as well as a UU architect who has designed several churches. The five churches were located in Bedford, Massachusetts, Cherry Hill, New Jersey, Devon, Media, and Wayne, Pennsylvania.

The final section will summarize my findings, and may include some suggestions to churches as to how they might proceed in future church construction planning and work.



A Brief Historical Overview

The oldest Unitarian Church in this country is King's Chapel, in Boston.

Although it is Unitarian in theology, it uses a 17th century Anglican liturgy, and comes out of a mostly Anglican heritage. For the most part, though, the congregational churches of smaller towns in New England are more typical of early Unitarian churches, and are more direct ancestors of the UU churches being built today. Early Unitarian and Universalist church buildings, like their contemporary descendants, were mostly simple and utilitarian. Although some were designed by well known architects, more were probably designed locally, without much regard to architectural trend-setting.

Like many more recent church building projects, King's Chapel was designed and built over the course of many years, from 1749 to 1758, with the first worship service in the new church in 1754.2 Many changes were wrought in King's Chapel over the years, which is typical of churches which continue to be actively used through several centuries. This means that the style of the church building is not strictly limited to the style and era in which it was built, but was influenced by later generations, until it was cast more solidly into the role of historic landmark.

One interesting feature of this church is that the pew-boxes "are an example of the first type built after churches began to have seats." Seating is one of the most important practical questions which must be faced in the design of worship spaces, and conveys important theological messages, as it physically places members of the congregation in relation to one another, the worship leader, the pulpit and the altar. Although for most of the early history of Unitarian and Universalist churches, pew

² Judith Marie Smith-Valley, "The Edifice Complex - Love carved in stone" (M. Div. senior paper, Harvard Divinity School, 1988), 21-22.

³ Smith-Valley, 28.



seating was the norm, Unitarian and UU churches span the complete history of church seating-styles, since the early stages of pew installation. More recent churches, from the middle of the 20th century on, tend to use flexible seating, rather than fixed pews, but pews have not been entirely eradicated yet. With flexible seating, it is fairly easy to reconfigure the space regularly to reflect both the style and the stated theological orientation of the worship service, which is a tremendous advantage.

There are several examples of highly acclaimed Unitarian and UU church architecture from earlier in the 20th century, from Frank Lloyd Wright's Unity Temple in Oak Park, Illinois (1904-6), to Louis Kahn's First Church of Rochester (1962), to Boston's First and Second Church (1972). These three were planned by a well-known architects, and some representatives of the congregation, with less overall congregational input than the churches being built by small and mid-size UU congregations today. Changes in the planning process reflect cultural and structural changes in religious movements in general, as well as variations in the character and resources of individual congregations. Those churches which are planned more by church committee than by an architectural virtuoso are less likely to catch the attention of architectural historians or design magazine writers, and large churches with more financial resources are more likely to employ well-known architects. Even in mid-century, a time of widely documented, spectacular church building, it is probable that many congregations quietly built or remodeled existing spaces, with little regard for architectural trend-setting. With a shift towards smaller and less moneyed congregations, which are less apt to design architecturally conspicuous buildings, there is likely to be less academic and architectural interest in church buildings.



Throughout, with a few noteworthy exceptions, a tight budget has characterized church building projects. Frank Lloyd Wright's Unity Temple, while a far cry in many respects from a community barn-raising, was designed as a relatively low-budget project. The primary material used was unfaced, poured concrete. The plan is symmetrical, a cube with four projecting bays, which allowed the molds made for the concrete to be re-used. There is no steeple here, a modern move to get away from the constraints of traditional churchy symbolism. However, the interior of the cube is marked off by a raised pulpit area, with a padded pew for the preachers, and traditional wooden pews for the congregation. Later 20th century churches, for the most part, reversed this pattern by alluding to a steeple in some ways, but placing flexible seating inside. Wright's religious background was Unitarian and Universalist, which is an apt example of the fact that many congregations are more likely to choose an architect who knows their religious tradition and theology, although that is only one of many factors in selecting an architect.

Another architecturally acclaimed Unitarian church of the 20th century is Louis Kahn's Fist Unitarian Church of Rochester, built in 1962. The process of dialog between congregation and architect seems to have been fairly simple. The congregation selected the architect, and then "Kahn sought to learn what he called the 'flavor' of that congregation, attending many of its services before he commenced the design for their church." The design of the Rochester church was thus based in large part on the architect's interpretation of the congregation's theology. Kahn was Jewish, and much of the population that the Rochester church served was also Jewish, which meant that,

⁴ Roger G. Kennedy, American Churches (New York: Stewart, Tabori & Chang, Pub. 1982), 32.

⁵ Kennedy, 32.

⁶ Kennedy, 38.



although Kahn was not Unitarian, there was a high degree of theological fit between that particular congregation and the architect. Perhaps because of the increasing complexity and fluidity of a congregation's theological composition, many current congregations seem less inclined to trust an architect with that task of theological interpretation. In the Rochester church, the movement towards increasing the space provided for educational purposes is very prominent, because the church provided school and social facilities to its neighborhood. Similarly, First and Second Church, in Boston, rents its space to Emerson College for classrooms during the week.

To find precedents for low-budget, utilitarian churches in which the design is largely directed from within the congregation, it is necessary to dig further back into the architectural history of noteworthy Unitarian and Universalist churches. The Old Ship Meetinghouse, in Hingham, Massachusetts, is perhaps the best example of an ancestor to these very recent churches. Although it was not a Unitarian church when it was built, it is typical in many respects of congregational churches which became Unitarian in early 19th century New England. Originally built in 1681, it is the oldest wooden church in this country, and resembles a large house, from the outside, except for a small belfry and steeple set on a flat balustraded deck on top of the roof. The renovations in 1729 and 1755 expanded the space and updated the style, but in 1791 the congregation voted to tear down the building and start over, as the building was "dowdy compared to churches in the newly fashionable 'Wren Style,'" but fortunately they reversed that vote

⁷ See especially the UU church of Delaware County, in Media, who rejected the firm BLT because of their seemingly fixed ideas of what UU was, and how to build a UU church.

⁸ Kennedy, 38.

⁹ G. E. Kidder Smith, The Beacon Guide to New England Houses of Worship (Boston: Beacon Press, 1989), 80-81.



the following year.¹⁰ As the age of the building approached great historical significance, it was restored to its original condition beginning in 1930.¹¹ Over the centuries, there were additional renovations and alterations, but throughout it seems that the voice of the congregation dominated any architectural professionals involved in the project from outside.

Incidentally, the name "Old Ship" refers to the inverted hull-like shape of the roof, with its exposed trusses and struts. The architect Herman Hassinger, in New Jersey, the former employer of David Donachy, current architect for the UU church of Cherry Hill, presently designs many churches which "look like overturned boats." The overturned boat style, however, tends to be fairly expensive and complicated to build, so churches with a tight budget are less likely to employ it. However, the visual theme of exposed roof truss-work continues to be important in the style of these new sanctuaries, as seen in Media, Cherry Hill, and others.

The 1950s to early 1970s were an era of economic growth, and expansion of Unitarian and UU churches into new, economically optimistic suburbs. All of the churches which I studied, with the exception of Bedford, were founded during this period, so they are all late-modern in their individual origins. The transition to postmodernism is arguably the first major generational and cultural shift which they have made. They all demonstrate enough theological and organizational flexibility to grow into what the postmodern period of religion may demand of them.

¹⁰ *ibid*, 81.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² D. Donachy, from interview, Cherry Hill, NJ, 2/18/00.



The transition to the Postmodern 1990s and beyond

Historical eras do not come and go cleanly, across all social groups, in one fell swoop. The simplest and most all inclusive definition of postmodernism is that it is what follows modernism. Modernism, having prevailed for much of the 20th century now appears as an era separate from the current time. Modern buildings now appear dated and ugly to many viewers, perhaps even naïve, leading to the view that we have now entered a different era. Assigning time periods to eras is always somewhat arbitrary, but two cultural and technological milestones might be used to mark the emergence of postmodernism into the mainstream of American (and international) culture, the movie *Star Wars* and the internet.

The release of the movie *Star Wars* in 1976 is a convenient epochal milestone. *Star Wars* differs from earlier space movies in several ways, including its newly sophisticated use of technology, its explicit relationship to the pre-modern story patterns of fairytales and mythology, and the marketing of the movie and proliferation of *Star Wars* toys. It figured prominently in the childhoods of GenXers, who constitute in some ways the first thoroughly postmodern generation. Those who grew up with Star Wars entered into the workplace around or following the development and widespread use of the internet. The role of the internet is still being negotiated, but its growing importance in communication and in business is having and will probably continue to have a widespread impact on the way we interact with and think about the world. Using these two events as markers, postmodernism in society might be seen as having its childhood

¹³ In architecture, the precise date of "the inauguration of postmodernism" is 3:32 p.m. on 15 July, 1972, when "the Pruitt-Igoe housing development in St. Louis, Missouri, a prize-winning complex designed for low income people, was dynamited as uninhabitable." (see Richard Appignanesi, C. Garratt, et al., *Introducing Postmodernism* (Lanham, MD: Totem Books, 1995), 114-115).



in the late 1970s to late 1980s or early 1990s, with its early adulthood spanning the 1990s, and its identity not yet firmly established, as a historical era.

Architectural, literary, and philosophical postmodernism began earlier, but did not have the same immediate widespread cultural impact as the above events, but all are defined against the immediate historical background of modernism. Having set out an approximate timeframe for the emergence of postmodernism, it might be helpful to rewind and take a brief look at what constituted modernism. Modernism in architecture may be defined as:

"...the overpowering faith in industrial progressivism and its translation into the pure, white International Style (or at least the machine aesthetic) with the goal of transforming society both in its sensibility and social make-up." ¹⁵

Modernism is in part an aesthetic movement which values abstraction and avoids representation and ornamentation. It is characterized by Jencks as a Protestant Crusade, which "wiped out decadence. Le Corbusier called this new age 'the vacuum cleaning period." Once all of that old ornament was removed from the architectural leading edge some complexity and eclecticism caught up with it. The generations which grew up with a Newtonian concept of physics were replaced by generations that also learned about quantum physics and chaos theory. The mechanized culture of the early and mid-20th century gave way to something else, which might be called postmodernism.

Architectural postmodernism acknowledges the past, but, "in a way which is non-revivalist and ironic," and is not anti-modernism, but rather replaces the universalizing drive of modern liberalism with an expansion towards ecclectic

¹⁴ For definition of the postmodern generations, see Craig K. Miller, *Postmoderns* (Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 1996).

¹⁵ Charles Jencks, What is Postmodernism? (London: Accademy Editions, 1996), 23. Italics original.

¹⁶ Jencks, 24-25.



multiculturalism.¹⁷ There are many distinct forms of post-modernism in architecture, including but not limited to historicism, straight revivalism, neo-vernacular, ad-hoc urbanist, metaphor metaphysical, and post-modern space.¹⁸ These replaced the International Style's search for a single mechanized answer.

While the churches I studied are not necessarily postmodern in architectural style, they exist in the postmodern cultural context of the 1990s. Architectural modernism covers a relatively small stretch of time within the historical span of modernity. Also, modernism as an artistic and architectural style is different from the wider cultural implications of modernity, and has a similarly smaller extent in time.¹⁹ Early exemplars of post-modern architecture, which were built in the 1960s to early 1970s, are isolated exemplars of a new movement, which do not reflect accurately the more conservative trends in new buildings in general. Postmodern architecture is different from the reflection of a postmodern cultural context in architectural forms.

Another trend which deserves mention in setting forth the postmodern architectural context (as opposed to postmodern architecture, as a movement within architecture) is the increasing power and control of multi-national corporations. The (hopefully short-lived) triumph of consumerism, has replaced the public space of the town square with the shopping mall.²⁰ This means that for the most part, churches are no longer at the visual center of the everyday public world, a dramatic change from their importance in the United States up to the middle of this century. As dominant features of the skyline, they have been replaced by more prominent commercial

¹⁷ See Jencks, 15.

¹⁸ Jencks outlines representatives of these types, with their sub-styles, following each from 1960 to 1990. Jencks, 36-37.

¹⁹ Richard Appignanesi et al., Introducing Postmodernism (Lanham, MD: Totem Books, 1995), 152.



structures, such as malls and skyscrapers, which rose up in the modern era. Now the churches (and public buildings) which once dominated cityscapes are dwarfed by skyscrapers and malls which were built from the early 20th century onwards.

The new Unitarian Universalist church buildings I looked at are mostly set back from the road, and in residential areas with relatively low visibility. Public transportation to the site is generally not evident. The older churches in the Boston area, in contrast, are generally close to the main road in town, and in an old downtown area, reflecting the centrality of the church in the community at the time when they were built. Either way, the church does not dominate an increasingly secularized and commercialized public space. When the last wave of church architecture literature crested in the early 1970s, churches were more important in the built landscape of North America then they have been since. Although new churches then had already receded from the centers of cities and towns, they were also moving into new ground which opened up a range of new architectural possibilities, whereas now they are building and rebuilding in already developed areas, with their corresponding constraints.

Postmodernism in religion is a little harder to pin down than postmodernism in architecture, because it hasn't been as extensively defined, and it is a less unified movement. In organized religion in the United States, Cimino points out a strong "decentralizing" trend, and describes the decreasing importance of traditional denominations. "Whereas the modern mind-set wants to maintain structure and set boundaries, the post-modern view holds that organizations will be shaped more by

²⁰ See Dianne Ghirardo, Architecture After Modernism, Chapter 1: Disney takes command, The public spaces of malls and museums, Public space: an epilogue (London: Thames and Hudson, Ltd., 1996).



inter-personal relationship than by rules and regulations."²¹ Unitarian Universalism, which intentionally de-emphasizes rules and regulations, seems uniquely positioned among the "mainline" denominations to adapt to the conditions of postmodernism. UU also reflects the eclecticism of postmodernism, in a manner which has been often criticized as salad-bar or buffet religion. In quoting from a variety of religious traditions, UU worship services, for example, participate in the postmodern tendency to disregard traditional fences between traditions, while using the content of those traditions, by incorporating readings from a wide range of sources. While it is true that some of the depth of meaning of the quotations may be lost in the cut-and-paste process, it is also not possible to authentically recapture or recreate the original context. Further, UU is built on a long history of skepticism, which is very important in the ever-shifting scenery of postmodernity.

Cimino's analysis of religion in America today stresses the decline of centralized authority, but retains a focus on Christian groups. Postmodern religion outside of Christianity is even more individualized, and has less of a legacy of centralization to contend with. Neo-Paganism, in particular, is an example of a religious movement which as a whole has never had one central authority, and in which the individual freely composes a form of the religion from the available materials, which usually bears a family resemblance to the belief systems of fellow neo-pagans of the same type. Interestingly, most of the UU churches I had some kind of neo-pagan group associated with them. Post-modern religion is characterized by flexibility and networking, with a fluid symbolic language which tends to disregard traditional boundaries.

²¹ Richard Cimino and D. Lattin, Shopping for Faith: American Religion in the New Millenium (San Fransisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1998), 117-118.



The consequence of postmodernity, for religions, is that they may need to spill out of their previously established boundaries (especially Sunday mornings and denominations), yet retain enough distinctiveness that it can serve the spiritual needs of their members. UU churches tend to be fairly flexible in some respects, but in order to continue healthy growth, may need to become more flexible in matters such as program and scheduling. The impact of postmodernism on church building is related to a number of important postmodern trends. First, the internet means that many visitors to the church will precede their initial live visit to the church with a visit to the website, so how the church represents itself online will be more and more important. Second, there is ever-increasing population movement, leading potentially to a higher degree of cultural, national, and ethnic backgrounds within a given congregation. Third, the blurring and dissolution of traditional and modern boundaries is probably here to stay. The multiculturalism which results in part from the above trends potentially increases cultural self-awareness and a tendency towards hybridization of cultures. Fourth, the technology of postmodernism undoes the need for a single, hierarchically supported central authority, which is highly compatible, at least in theory, with the congregational polity espoused within the UUA. Although fundamentalist and evangelical religions are also on the rise, even these demonstrate a kind of cultural flexibility, and a range of programs and choices within their more rigid theological format.

Fransisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1998), 117-118.



Unitarian Universalism:

As a denomination, Unitarian Universalism has been growing steadily through the last 15 years. The total membership of the UUA has gone from 189,209 in 1989 to 215,624 in 1999, an increase of almost 14%. Annual growth for the denomination as a whole has been about 1-2% per year, since the early 1980s.²² Some individual congregations, such as Cherry Hill and BuxMont, have been growing more rapidly than this. The growth of the denomination, and of the individual churches, is related to the harmony between certain aspects of UUism and life in postmodern society.

Universalist denominations in the 1960s. As mentioned above, although it has a central denominational office, it is built on an ideal of local, congregational polity, without ever defining what the individual is to believe. As such it is a uniquely welcoming place for religious skeptics and eclectics, a group which seems to be growing in the postmodern context. On the main denominational website, UU is summarized as follows:

What We Believe

Unitarian Universalism is a liberal religion born of the Jewish and Christian traditions. We keep our minds open to the religious questions people have struggled with in all times and places.

We believe that personal experience, conscience, and reason should be the final authorities in religion. In the end religious authority lies not in a book, person, or institution, but in ourselves. We put religious insights to the test of our hearts and minds.

We uphold the free search for truth. We will not be bound by a statement of belief. We do not ask anyone to subscribe to a creed. We say ours is a noncreedal religion. Ours is a free faith.

We believe that religious wisdom is ever changing. Human understanding of life and death, the world and its mysteries, is never final. Revelation is continuous. We

²² data from John Hurley, Director of Information, Unitarian Universalist Association, email correspondence, 2/2000.



celebrate unfolding truths known to teachers, prophets, and sages throughout the ages.

We affirm the worth of all women and men. We believe people should be encouraged to think for themselves. We know people differ in their opinions and lifestyles, and we believe these differences generally should be honored.

We seek to act as a moral force in the world, believing that ethical living is the supreme witness of religion. The here and now and the effects our actions will have on future generations deeply concern us. We know that our relationships with one another, with diverse peoples, races, and nations, should be governed by justice, equity, and compassion.²³

Unitarian Universalism has always incorporated a post-Christian element, along with the liberal Christianity that predominated in the first hundred years or so of the Unitarian denomination. Unitarianism had its origins in a rational approach to scripture and religion, which was thoroughly modern in its mentality (i.e., rejection of miracles, rational redefinition of revelation, suspicion of ritual). In the mid 20th century, religious humanism was probably the most important theological bent in the denomination, but Christianity and Judaism were also important in many congregations. As the second half of the twentieth century progressed, there have been increasing numbers of Unitarians and Universalists whose religious inspiration came from various Asian traditions. "World religions" have been important in the Unitarian and Unitarian Universalist traditions for a long time, as multiple sources of religious knowledge and inspiration. The postmodern breakdown of previously established religious boundaries and widespread multiculturalism, does make a real difference in UUism, but it is part of an already well established pattern of evolution. For other denominations of a similar type, such as the United Church of Christ, the transition to the postmodern world has been marked by steadily declining membership.

Of course, other religious groups are also growing, especially some conservative groups which related to postmodernism differently. Some evangelical churches, for



instance, have rigid theologies but flexible and often high-tech approaches to worship. In more traditional churches which are growing, the new members might come from a wider range of backgrounds than they had in the past. Nonetheless, UU congregations seem to be particularly well-situated to continue and grow as a religious force within postmodernism. Growth among UU congregations, of course, is unevenly distributed, and the churches described here are growing faster. Those UU churches whose membership is stagnant or shrinking may well have some work to do, in terms of their organizational health, how welcoming they are, and whether people know that they exist (Do they have a website? Is it any good?).

²³ From Marta Flanagan, "We are Unitarian Universalists" on www.uua.org/weare.html



Postmodern Church-building

The question of what constitutes a "church" has become more complicated as the old "center" (consisting largely of main-line Protestant churches) has faded and aged considerably in recent decades. The religious landscape of America is changing, influenced in significant ways by the emergence of postmodernity. Whether or not recently built churches conform to the definition of postmodern architecture, they are imbedded in a postmodern cultural context. In the early to mid 1970s, there was a wave of new publication on the topic of church architecture. At that time, a large number of modern churches had been built, enough to substantially impact the image of what a church should look like (at least among architects). Was this era the final flowering or last gasp of modernism in church architecture? What is the style, if any, of churches being built today? Why the absence of recent literature on church architecture? It might reflect a general state of confusion about the religious landscape of America, a slowdown in new church building, or a lack of interest in churches among architectural writers. As far as I can tell, no recent UU churches have attracted much in the way of architectural attention, the last noted UU church construction being the rebuilding of First and Second Church in Boston in 1972. Nonetheless, as the denomination grows new churches continue to be built, while the reference materials available remain situated in an earlier cultural context.



Review of church-renovation literature

The 1950s to early 1970s was a period of noteworthy and highly documented church architecture. During those years, a large number of churches broke out of traditional forms to experiment with modernism, flexible space and flexible seating. In the early 1970s, there was a glut of publication on the topics of sacred architecture, liturgical space, and church renovations, including a number of books and two periodicals, Faith and Form: Journal of the Guild for Religious Architecture and the Journal of the American Society for Church Architecture. Neither of these periodicals remains in print, probably because of changes in the built religious landscape, due in part to changing denominations and the less centralized, less well-funded groups which are building these days.

The book *First Impressions*, published in 1993, is the most recent work in its genre. It aims at bringing "young people," which to the author means Baby Boomers, those born between 1946 and 1964,²⁴ into the church. Although this book was published seven years ago, I still find no excuse for the omission of younger people. Baby Boomers, at present, are moving fast towards the category of younger grandparents. There is now, as of 2000, a whole generation more of younger adults, who mostly make their own decisions about religious affiliation and practice. I would say that this presently includes those born from 1965 to 1985. Church attendance in this group is probably much lower overall than among older people, and I expect that it is less inclined to be in

²⁴ Robert Lee, First Impressions, Effective Church series (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1993), 13-14.



the traditional pattern of Sunday morning church attendance.²⁵ For example, participation in smaller groups has become more important.²⁶

Although Lee does address some postmodern issues, such as flexible scheduling,²⁷ with worship services at times other than Sunday morning, the work is essentially a late-modern holdover. Its target group, the baby boomers, grew up more or less solidly in the modern era, whereas the formative years of GenXers and beyond have been quite different. He gives some useful practical suggestions, but the message of this book seems to be that church is just for older people. Another reason that it does not fit the needs of currently growing congregations is that it is all about making the church more attractive and drawing people in. Those congregations which I saw built not primarily because they felt the building would bring in new people, but because they were growing anyway. Few congregations have the financial resources to build or renovate their edifices purely for advertising purposes, and they are less likely to be working with old, traditional church buildings than Lee supposes.

The similar *Tired Dragons* was written in the early 1970s, almost thirty years ago. Its focus is on renovating the "tired dragons," old urban churches built in traditional or older styles, by making them more modern. Lynn points out in the introduction that the influence of churches is not as extensive as it once was. This means, among other things, that churches can no longer get around aspects of local building codes, which they might have been able to dodge in the past, an issue which is very important for those

²⁵ Overall, church attendance has dropped substantially from 1972 to 1996. In 1972, about 41.2% of those surveyed by the University of Michigan GSS attended religious services nearly every week or more, compared to 29.7% in 1996. Meanwhile, the proportion of those attending religious services once a year or less rose from 28.4% in 1972 to 39.1% in 1996. (from http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/GSS99/trend/attend.htm).



engaged in church construction to work with from the start. The renovations recommended by Lynn are meant to transform an outdated building by evaluating its uses and making more flexible spaces, around the concept of a "full-functioning environment." Throughout, Lynn stresses flexible spaces which encourage community participation, a goal which was variously accomplished in modern church buildings.

The issues encountered by most of the churches I studied were quite different from those of a congregation whose building project was focused on renovating an existing older church. Although in many cases the old spaces were cramped and not perfectly suited to the church community's needs, they were mostly (with the exception of the Bedford church) fairly modern spaces or older non-church buildings (two houses and a creamery) which had been converted to use by the church during the modern era of church architecture. The main reason for building was a need for more room, rather than dissatisfaction with the aesthetics of the old building.

One interestingly outdated suggestion in Ed Lynn's book is the idea of the "media room."²⁸ The importance and rapid technological advancement of electronic and audio-visual media over the past three decades is such that it seems unusual to set aside a room for them. Computers, televisions, and projectors, rather than being confined to one room, are moved around as needed, if there isn't one for every room in which they might be needed. Although it might be appropriate to set aside a large closet for storage of these things, when not in use, confining them to one room is unnecessary as electronic equipment gets lighter and more versatile. The closet for media equipment storage in BuxMont, for example, at the entrance to the sanctuary.

²⁶ Miller, 169.

²⁷ *Ibid*, 83, scheduling, and 105-107

²⁸ Edwin Lynn, *Tired Dragons* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1972), 45-47.



Moving the Furniture, by William Seth Adams, contains two essays dealing with liturgical space. Although the book is new (published in 1999), both of the essays dealing with liturgical space first appeared in the spring of 1987. It has some helpful suggestions, but is not a particularly recent work. As the title suggests, the essays focus on movable seating, variable liturgical space. These essays provide some valuable insights in terms of the theological implications of liturgical space. The problem in their application to UU congregations is that Adams' essays are structured around Episcopalian liturgical life, a church year calendar and a set of sacraments which are very different from UU patterns of worship. The contrast between the Episcopal churches Adams describes and envisions and the UU churches I have seen nonetheless revealed some important theological implications of UU church design. One insight is how the use of stained glass displays a distancing of liturgical life from creation, the goodness of the world. 29 The new UU churches, whatever other considerations have played into it, have all opted for fairly large, plain glass windows. Also, where Episcopal churches might wrestle with the tension or balance between images of the grandeur and servanthood of God, resulting in a question of emphasis on Temple or Domestic metaphors for the house of God,³⁰ for UU congregations, the Temple idea tends to be much less important, and the churches are sometimes modeled on houses, when they do not conform to the most common type, of a simple meeting-house.

Adams' arguments for variable liturgical space are based around the sacraments of the Episcopal church, and so do not relate directly in their specifics to UU church seating plans. The point may be carried over, however, that even within UU churches,

²⁹ William S. Adams, Moving the Furniture (Church Hymnal Corp., 1999), 148-50.



different seating arrangements emphasize different aspects of the community's religious life. Where all seats face forward toward the pulpit, an emphasis on the sermon and rational discourse is often implied. When the seats are gathered around in a more circular or arc-like configuration, the arrangement communicates a greater emphasis on community gathering. Alone of three works, Adams' book leaves the question of practicalities, such as funding and the importance of local building codes, to advisors in the local diocese.

There is an enormous amount of variation in the needs and constraints of different congregations in their building projects. Stressing the role of local advisors seems appropriate (especially because this emphasizes relationships over fixed rules). On the other hand, church building committees do find written materials helpful in planning their buildings, and denominations may not always have the resources a particular congregation needs. In looking for other background material, some other resources might help churches in the practical dimensions of their planning processes. One potential source of information and guidelines are works on co-housing, which combine suggestions for group process with practical advice on hiring architects and contractors. Similar works might also be available for the planners of private and charter schools, which, as public buildings, have to conform to many of the same codes and regulations as church buildings.

The issues addressed in the church renovation books include practicalities, secularization, and movable seating, or variable liturgical space. The battle over movable seating seems to have been pretty much fought and won. It is no longer a

30 Adams, 142-44.

³¹ See Chris Hanson, *The Cohousing Handbook* (Vancouver, BC and Point Roberts, WA: Hartley and Marks Publishers, 1996).



radical new option, having been well-established as an alternative for at least 30 years. This does not mean that every congregation will eliminate old fixed pews in their churches. The Bedford church kept theirs, after some debate, in the interests of maintaining the historical nature of the building. Another possible reason for the decrease in literature on church building and renovation is that it has become less different from other types of construction.

The American cultural landscape has changed substantially in the last decade, not to mention the last thirty years. The internet was tiny at the beginning of the 1990s, restricted in use to a few chat groups and email among college students and a few others. Now, although widespread access to the internet is fairly new, it is becoming quite mainstream, at least among the more prosperous and more formally educated segments of the population (who are the ones who generally get to define historical eras, anyway, and the ones who tend to go to UU churches.) Given the changing technological, economic and cultural landscape, the rapid reconfiguration of religious affiliations in many areas, changing financial profiles of churches (usually meaning lower budgets), and the importance of consensus and community input in the process of church design, a more up-to-date work on the subject of church architecture would certainly be useful to the building committees and other members of these congregations.

To build or rebuild a church at the current turn of the millennium is to make space for the reinvention of religious life in the emerging postmodern world. What follows are several examples of how congregations have approached the challenge of building or renovating worship spaces and church buildings.



5 Churches of the past decade



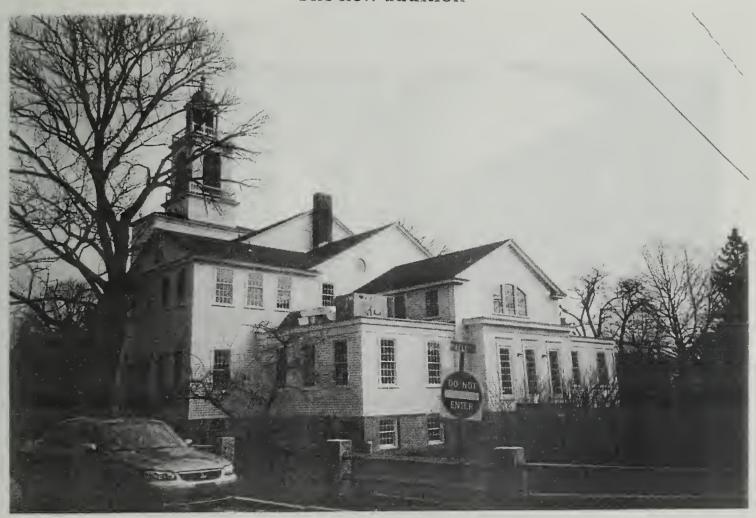
Bedford: Adding on to Tradition

View from

The Great Road



The new addition



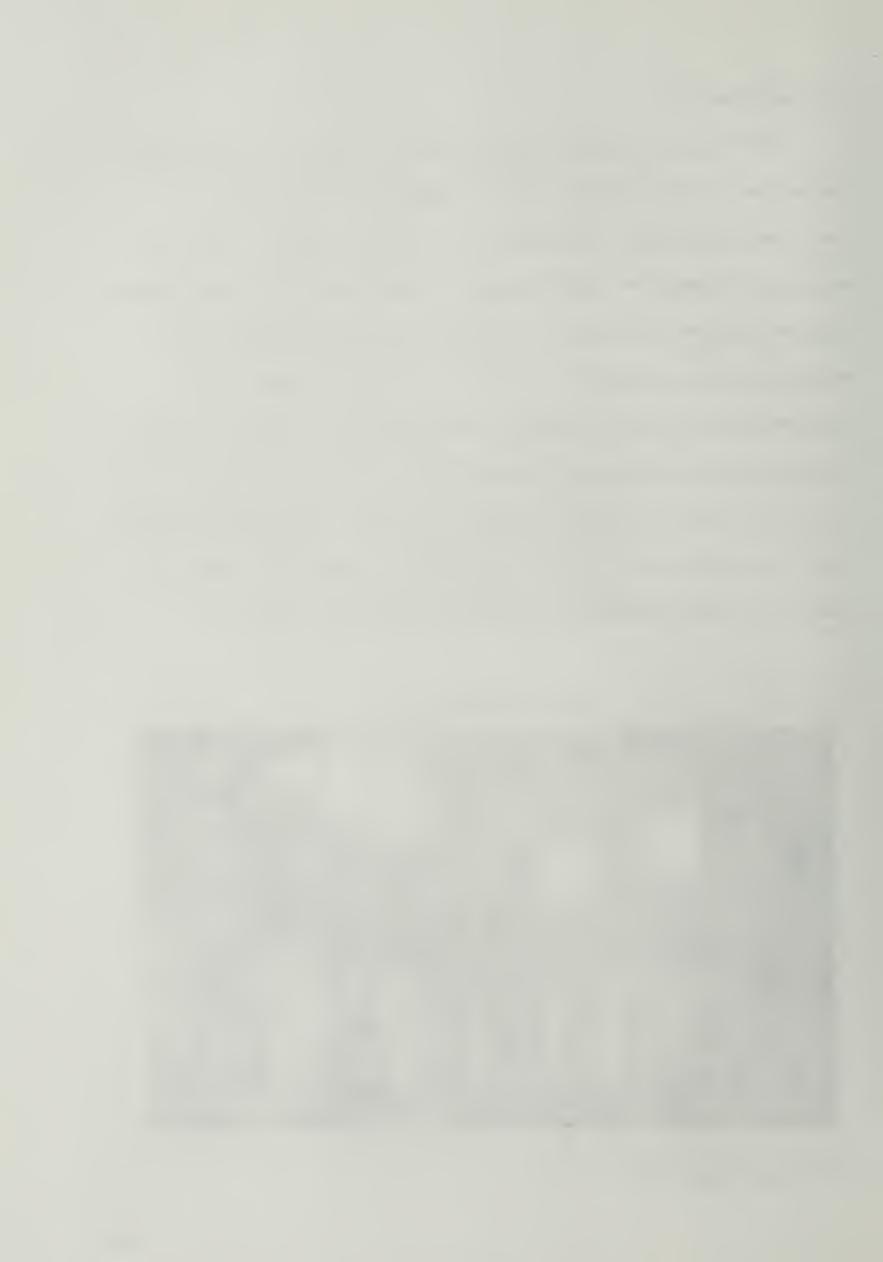


First Parish, Bedford

The Unitarian Universalist church of Bedford is located in the center of Bedford, Massachusetts, a suburb of Boston. The white clapboard building dominates the old town common, and is clearly visible from the main road through town. An addition was made to the back of the older building in the 1960s, providing space for offices and Religious Education³² classrooms. The new addition, which adds 6100 sq. ft. to the building, includes a new minister's office, RE rooms, a new fellowship hall, and expanded basement space. The planning process began about three years ago, and it has been about one year since groundbreaking. The building is almost finished and will be ready for occupancy and use later this spring. A change of architects caused a major delay in the process - the first architect having been fired because of cost, some conflict of ideas, and because the architect seemed to have lost interest in the project.



³² Hereafter abbreviated as RE.



renovations of the sanctuary. The most controversial change was the removal of a high pulpit, which had been in the space since about 1930, but was perceived by older members as having always been there. The high pulpit was sent to another UU church, in Texas, where one of Bedford's former interim ministers is currently a settled minister. After considerable discussion, it was decided to retain the pews in the sanctuary, a compromise between those who had wanted to update the sanctuary more extensively and those who had wanted to keep the high pulpit. The most expensive single item in the sanctuary was the new pulpit, which was custom made by a local woodworker, and incorporated some elements of the old high pulpit. Although the new pulpit looks solid and traditional, it is set on wheels and can easily be moved around the stage at the front of the church.

At the same time as the addition, a separate committee was formed to plan

Sanctuary





Many UU congregations, especially in Massachusetts, continue to meet in buildings which date from the early 19th century, and in some cases earlier. New UU church buildings are fewer and further between in the Boston area, because of the abundance of 18th and 19th century "First Parish" meeting houses, often square-ish white clapboard constructions, sometimes with a balcony. Here, likewise, the connection with earlier Unitarian (and in some cases Universalist) history is more prominent. The case of the Bedford church demonstrates how one congregation has chosen to deal with changing space needs in a historical building. While membership might have been the same in an earlier century, there was presumably less demand for extra space for RE. The current membership is approximately 300 with a Religious Education enrollment of about 80, at the moment. Two years ago, before construction started, the RE enrollment was about 120. The need for more RE space was the most important factor in deciding to make the addition to the church, but during the construction, the RE program was displaced, and enrollment dropped to around 60. Presumably RE enrollment will bounce back to its previous levels, once the new construction is completed.

This example of historical conservation of the church building reflects, perhaps, a typically post-modern recovery effort - an attempt to draw out facets of history which the past hundred years have covered over (especially as in the controversy over the high pulpit). The planning of this renovation involved extensive research and recovery of the church's 19th century history. The addition strives to accommodate the needs of the congregation while fitting into the historical district architecture which surrounds it. The interior is more traditional than modern or postmodern, architecturally. Although it was built to harmonize with the older part of the building and the houses round it, the traditional appearance is built up around current technologies, amenities, building



regulations, and program needs. There is a substantial amount of ornamental trim, such as (flat columns) which make some historical reference. This provides a sense of coherence with the older 1817 building.³³

New Pulpit



Sources of information for this section:

Website: www.ultranet.com/~fpbedfor/

Building committee: Art Smith (conversation, 2/13/2000)

Church Administrator: Lindy Evans (conversations on 2/10 and 3/14/2000)

Karen Lynch Frederick, former member of sanctuary committee

All photos taken 14 March 2000.

³³ The society had been gathered originally in 1730, so the main part of the building had replaced an older meetinghouse, according to the church website.

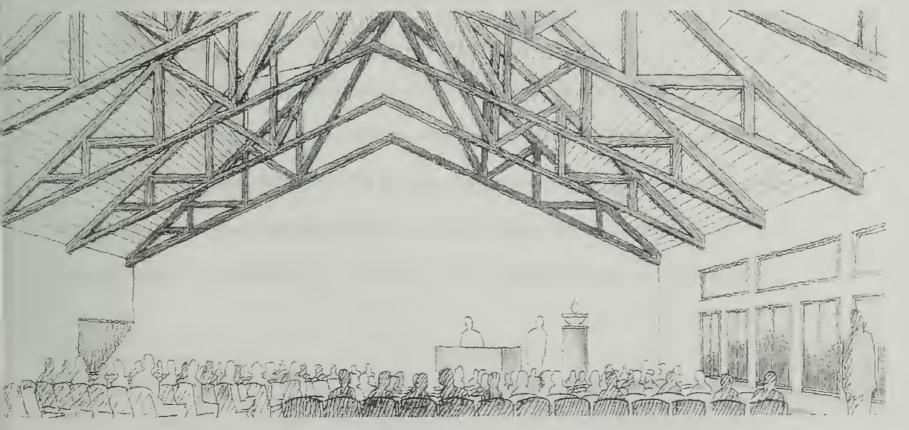


Cherry Hill: A process of discovery

Main approach



Original architect's rendition of planned sanctuary interior





Unitarian Universalist Church, Cherry Hill

The UU church of Cherry Hill, New Jersey is just visible from the road. It consists of several buildings, set on a 13 acre lot, which are approached via a long driveway. It is a congregation of about 450-500 members, of which about 350 are active.34 It had been founded as a fellowship, and remained without a minister until the late 1970s, when they hired a part-time extension minister. The community in which it is located is a suburb, located about half an hour away from the city of Philadelphia. Its neighbors along Chapel Avenue include many businesses, stores, and several other churches, while the residential areas are nearby, on smaller side streets. At the present time, the new building is under construction - framed and enclosed, but without electricity, heat, and plumbing, and with the inside walls only framed in. The oldest building on the property, now called "Unitarian House," was built around 1790, and extensively renovated in 1996-1997. This extends out towards the road, while the new building rises just behind it (the two are connected by an angled hallway). The view from the new building, and especially the sanctuary, is directed out over the woods behind the church, and only a very few windows face the road.35

The original campus of buildings was composed of the old house, "a Religious Education unit and our magnificent Fellowship Hall... plus an RE/office building." "Unitarian House" was built c.a. 1790, and was the only building on the property when it was acquired by the fellowship in 1956. The Fellowship Hall had been a large, wooden domed building, built in the 1960s. It was composed mostly of a circular

³⁴ Gordon Marshall 2/18/00

³⁵ I think that the direction of the church's viewpoint towards the woods highlights a desire to get away from the ordinary pace of the street, of the modern suburb. While we might see the woods as naturally more beautiful (I certainly think they are), it is important to recognize that even this notion of natural beauty is culturally conditioned.



sanctuary/multi-purpose room, with a small kitchen and bathrooms near the entrance. The "beloved Fellowship Hall" was severely damaged by fire on 3 February 1997, so the original plans to renovate it were replaced by plans to build an entirely new worship space, this time adjacent to the RE and administrative areas of the church. Rod Wolfson, the original architect for the new project, reported that the dome had had very bad acoustics, and the new sanctuary, which is rectangular, should echo less. The fairly simple RE and office building was located to the other side of the house. In 1991, the church moved to having two worship and RE sessions on Sunday mornings, to accommodate the growing congregation.

The congregation organized a "Building Our Dream" program in 1994, which came after long range planning for the growth of the congregation. Through this, they organized a capital fund campaign to support a two-phase building project, which began with the renovation of the farmhouse, completed in January 1997. This was to have been followed by renovation of the fellowship hall, and the construction of more RE space, but because of the fire, the original plans were changed. With the original architects, the congregation redesigned their renovations to connect the new sanctuary with the RE area and the old farmhouse.

Throughout the process, cost has been a major concern. More than at any of the other churches I studied, congregants at Cherry Hill were actively involved not only with the design, but in the actual construction of the building. The participation of so many non-professionals in a project of this size gives it a slower pace. The amount of time that the project takes seems to be inversely proportional to the amount of money available for construction. In mid-November 1998, the original architects, Bower, Lewis,

³⁶ Web page, as of 2/26/00.



and Thrower, resigned from the project over issues of liability, cost, and some conflict over details in the design of the building. Another architect, David Donachy, was hired to work on the construction drawings, etc., through the project's completion.

Everything seems to have been worked on by committee - there is no one person in charge of the project, although there is a project manager, who works nearly full-time on the project.

The forecasted date of completion is later this year, perhaps in the summer, making for a process of approximately 6 years, beginning in 1994.

The new building incorporates the functions of two older buildings, the former fellowship hall and the RE building. Its style can be described as "Quaker-meetinghouse modern," fairly simple and functional, with little ornamentation and a conscientious avoidance of crosses. It is much larger than the two older buildings had been, combined. The entryway, which faces towards the road, opens onto a fellowship/coffee area. To the right is a small kitchen, two large RE rooms, a coat room, a restroom, stairs down to the lower level, and the hallway to the farmhouse building, which contains the church offices. The lower level includes two more RE rooms, and a large multi-purpose room, which can be rented out to other groups. Having this large downstairs area available for rent allows the congregation to reserve the sanctuary for worship, which has the practical advantage of reducing the need for furniture-moving, and re-arranging the worship space for other purposes.

To the left of the main entrance is the sanctuary. According to the plan, the sanctuary will seat 364-374 people, in movable chairs, and there will also be a permanent bench along the perimeter of the room (covering air ducts). A pair of large doors, at the back of the room can be opened to accommodate some overflow seating in



the coffee area (another 50-100 chairs). The pulpit and stage will be set off-center at the front of the room, two steps up from the floor so that the preacher can be more easily seen.³⁷ A window in the shape of an abstract chalice is planned for near the roof-peak of the wall over the stage. There are no windows along the left-hand wall, which faces towards the front of the building, but there is a row of dormers high up in the roof. Along the opposite wall, a series of windows faces out over the woods (see architect's rendition, page 30). Throughout, cross-like shapes have been avoided.

The importance of the sanctuary is balanced with a slightly larger RE area, and a multi-purpose room which is almost as large as the sanctuary. The building's design is simple and utilitarian, but the sanctuary's open ceiling, with roof trusses, and the clear windows which look out over the woods give the building an aesthetic focus. The motive for the building project, initially, was to accommodate the need for more RE space, which had been planned for since 1986. This is reflected in the balance of available space in the building. The other important element in this new construction was the move away from holding worship in the multi-purpose Fellowship Hall, and into its own dedicated space. Although the space is designated for worship, the seating is flexible, which allows for the possibility of other uses, as well as allowing for different styles of worship service. Among the churches that I visited, this seems to have been a relatively long planning and building process.³⁸

³⁷ Here there is a small trade-off, perhaps, of theology of equality and practical concerns.

³⁸ Sources of information for this section were:

Amy Miller, Chair of Construction task force (phone conversation, 2/2000)

Gordon Marshal, Project Manager representing the church (interview, 2/18/2000)

Architect(s): Dave Donachy, Architect, Morristown, NJ (an Episcopalian)

Roderick Wolfson, former architect, of Bower Lewis and Thrower

Website: http://www.svnergration.com/uucinch/



The Main Line:

Postmodern Architecture meets Postmodern Religion



sanctuary





Main Line Unitarian Church, Devon, FA

Roderick Wolfson, of Bower, Lewis, and Thrower Architects, in Philadelphia PA, is in the unique position of having designed five UU church buildings, three of which were actually built. One of the churches which was "not built" is the Cherry Hill church, which is now being built with some alterations to the original plans. While working in Florida, Wolfson entered, and won, a design competition for the Unitarian-Universalist Church of Fort Lauderdale.³⁹ This church, like the Cherry Hill church, is divided more or less down the middle between RE space and worship space. A modernized steeple stands over the entrance, with an inscribed circle (see photo) at the top. The Unitarian Fellowship of West Chester building, which was not built for financial reasons, would have had a very large RE wing, in comparison to its sanctuary. The next church which he designed was in State College, PA, the Unitarian Universalist Church of Centre County. That church sought out Wolfson because they had heard about the Ft. Lauderdale church. Here, the sanctuary is similar to the sanctuary at Cherry Hill, in that there are floor-level windows along one side and only very high windows in the roof facing towards the driveway. The square windows in this building have distinctly cross-shaped mullions, which might not be acceptable in some UU congregations. One of the interesting things about the Centre County congregation is that they reportedly make frequent use of their movable seating, so that it the arrangement of the sanctuary does not generally stay the same two Sundays in a row.

The Main Line Unitarian Church, in Devon PA, was the only one of these churches which I could visit. It was also the architect's home church, when he was growing up, which probably contributed to his being chosen for the project. It is set

³⁹ For photos and illustrations of these churches, see the appendix.



deep in a residential area of the Main Line, a neighborhood of large mansions. From the road, it looks like a large house, but what appear at first glance to be panes of a single large window are in fact individual windows, each of which reaches floor-to-ceiling in a room. Here again, the originally planned building renovation was disrupted by a major fire, in February 1992, which completely destroyed the house which had been the church's original building and severely damaged the "new" buildings. Therefore, the new building became the old building. The new building, which houses educational, social, and support spaces retains the "religious home" connotation of the older building, which burned down, while the old-new buildings at the back are more obviously modern in appearance. The main impetus for building, again, was a need for more RE space, although the sanctuary was also expanded.

Connection between the old/new and new/old buildings exterior interior







The sanctuary was re-built following the fire, in which it was severely damaged, almost doubling its seating capacity. The outside walls of the older building had been made of stone, and the new portion was done in grey stucco, to reduce costs while blending reasonably well with the older stone walls. One interesting feature of the sanctuary is that the top window, over the stage/pulpit area, has cross-shaped mullions which usually cast the shadow of a cross on the front wall of the sanctuary sometime during the Sunday service. Here, the chairs are moved occasionally, but are mostly kept in the same arrangement.

This is the one church in this group which certainly qualifies as post-modern in architecture, and so I have included it even though it was built much earlier (in '92, versus '99) than the other churches I looked at. It also, as a church, exhibits some tendencies which are becoming more important in recent years. First, this is a very large church, with four full-time ministers, and about 700 members, plus an RE enrollment of about 400. The Main Line church currently holds three services on a Sunday, two in the morning and one in the evening. The sanctuary is not big enough to hold the entire membership, and there is far more RE space than worship space. The presence of an evening service, in particular, demonstrates that this church is providing a wider range of options, so that the sense of choice is greater. This sense of choice, among different available services, may be one of the reasons that very large churches have been becoming more popular, across the whole religious spectrum, in America of the late '90s. Also, because the large size of the church, they are no longer trying to bring the entire membership together at a single service.



Wolfson reports that the process of designing and building a UU church is exceptionally long. Although he likes the long process, and feels that the extra investment of time involved with consensus building is meaningful, he recognizes that it is not good for business. The process at Cherry Hill, for example, had taken eight years by the time of his resignation, and the building is still under construction. Consensus building is more important for UUs than for members of some other denominations emotionally, and through fund-raising, the congregation has to buy into the design. He thinks that architecture firms without UU architects might have less patience with the length of the process. Most of the churches I looked at sought out an architect who would accommodate the church's design opinions, rather than a UU architect. The architect's religious background can be very important to a church, in assuring them that their community's religious mosaic will be better understood. The most important thing seems to be that the churches want an architect who will understand and work with their vision of the congregation, and many different factors play into a congregations's assessment of an architect.40

Website, http://www.libertynet.org/devonuu/site visit, to Devon, PA, 2/19/2000

⁴⁰ Sources of information for this section were:

Bower, Lewis, and Thrower Architects, Philadelphia PA Roderick Wolfson, partner, interview 2/18/00

⁽Member and chair of Property Committee at First Unitarian of Philadelphia)



UU Church of Delaware County

A critical reflection on the past

new building, front



new building, rear, with space for expansion of sanctuary



old sanctuary, current fellowship hall, exterior





UU Church of Delaware County

The Unitarian Universalist Church of Delaware County is located on a medium-sized road in a mixed residential/business area. There is a modern Baptist church across the street. The UU church is set at the back of its lot, with the parking lot between the building and the street. Its "light box," on top of the new sanctuary, sets it apart, acting as a substitute for a steeple. The congregation seems to be mostly humanist, but also includes other points of view. The congregation is composed of 262 current members, with an RE enrollment of 115. A main priority for this building project was to provide a larger and better worship space, but the RE enrollment had also been growing substantially.

The original building, constructed in the late 1950s, had an octagonal sanctuary, with narrow hallways along the sides. Its entrance was a half-floor below the fellowship hall, and a half-floor above the RE rooms, and the restrooms were below the level of the RE rooms. The old building had won an architectural design award at the time that it was built, but had always plagued the congregation with physical problems, from a leaking roof to the stinking bathrooms. The design of the first building here was conducted mostly by the architect, with the building committee, and the congregation had very little input during the design process. Because cost was an important factor, the congregation made a deal with the contractor to split any money saved from the construction costs. At the end of the construction project, they split \$12,000, in 1950s dollars.

Although money was initially saved in that project, cutting corners had contributed to a host of structural problems with the building, therefore, in the 1999 addition, which about doubled the size of the building, the congregation made the



quality of the building a higher priority than saving money in the short run. Most of the money for the project was raised within the congregation, by asking the members to raise their pledges by 25% for the next three, then four years. Some additional money was raised by entering into a land-easement agreement with one of the church property's neighbors. The new addition has been made with possible expansions in mind, and an unfinished basement which could easily be converted into RE space, as needed.

Designing the new building was informed by the perceived shortcomings of the process that the congregation had used 40 years earlier. The architect was chosen because she said that she would build what the congregation wanted, a building that was about the identity of the church community, rather than the architect. There was a continuous process of input from the congregation and committee to the architect, where in the design of the old building the committee and architect had worked behind closed doors. In the beginning of the process, the church contacted 13 different firms, and from the dozen responses they received, they interviewed five firms. The chosen architect, Shep Houston of Belmont Hills, was seen as "wonderful to work with," and a very good listener, attentive to what members of the congregation said. The committee made decisions by consensus throughout the process, so that there were no dissenting votes. The process worked remarkably smoothly for this church, although the same architect is now working with another church, and it is reportedly not going as smoothly there.

Including BLT, which was rejected because of their attitude of expertise - that they had done UU churches before, knew all about UU, and knew how to design a UU church. The committee preferred to keep the congregation's voice dominant in the design process.



View from old to new sanctuary

an axis with the old sanctuary, so that there is a view through the new link from the new sanctuary to the old fellowship hall/sanctuary. The central part of the building, which houses the stairs and a wheelchair lift, serves as a place to greet visitors and gather before the service. The old sanctuary continues to serve as a fellowship hall for coffee hour and can be rented out to the various other groups which use the space. These include a chamber music group, and a once-yearly Gilbert and Sullivan production.

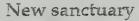


On weekdays, a day school rents out the RE space. There is also a pagan group, not directly linked to the church, that rents the space for meetings. Because of the expansion of the physical space, it has become easier to schedule meetings - the available spaces are not booked as fast. The minister's study is adjacent to the sanctuary, and both open onto a "cocktail deck" which overlooks the congregation's memorial garden, which was built in the early 90s.

The new sanctuary has a high roof, with open beams, topped by the light box which gives the sanctuary its distinctive character and appears repeatedly in photos of the church on the church's website. The floor of the sanctuary is made of recycled hardwood beams, taken from old factories, which is in keeping with the congregation's



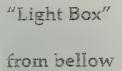
commitment to environmental conservation, as well as having the immediate advantage of being hard and durable. There have been some complaints by congregants that the new room echoes too much, or that it is harder to hear than it had been in the old fellowship hall. This is probably partially related to the larger size and higher ceiling of the room, and Susan Adnopoz, the representative of the building committee who showed me around, believes that these concerns can be adequately addressed by improvements in the sound system and in people's use of the microphone. Because the old sanctuary is much smaller, the microphone was not necessary there. The new sanctuary is related to the older one, but does not copy it exactly. Also, in the new sanctuary, the folding plastic chairs are not moved around as much as they were in the other room, perhaps because they are still getting used to the space (although the choir has been trying different places), or because of the current minister's preferences.

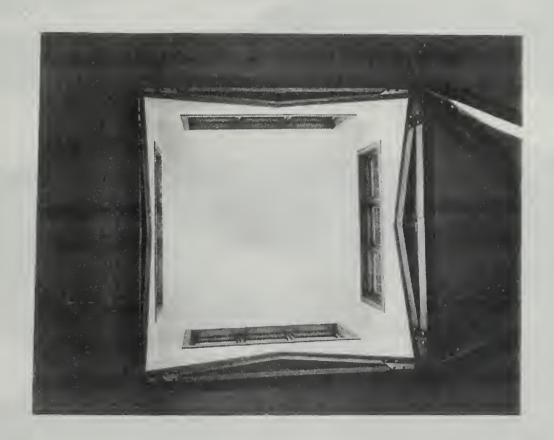






In summary, this congregation added to, and substantially renovated, their old 1950s-modern church, because the old worship space had become too cramped. There was also a need for more space for RE and meetings, and the basement utility room, bathrooms, and other aspects of the building also badly needed improvement. The process of funding, designing and administrating the building project went fairly smoothly, with the building committee making decisions by consensus and the architect working in close conjunction with the congregation. As at other churches, the building project seems to have precipitated the minister's departure. The priorities here were to create a dedicated sanctuary, which had a religious but un-churchy feel, to improve the RE space and the building's structure, to allow for future expansion, and ensure the quality of the new building, and to work through consensus.⁴²





⁴² Sources of information for this section:

Site visit, 2/20/2000

Interview with Susan Adnopoz, 2/20/2000 (Sunday)

also some comments from other members following the church service.

Conversations with church administrator

website, http://www.uucdc.org/



The BuxMont UU Fellowship

Basics for growth



New sanctuary





BuxMont Unitarian Universalist Fellowship

The BuxMont Unitarian Universalist Fellowship was founded in 1960, and acquired the property on which it currently meets in 1963. The property is off a major road, in a mostly commercial area with some older residences. The original building was a creamery, built around the 1860s, which had served as an elementary school in the 1920s-40s. The main feature of the property is a wide creek that runs past the windows of the new sanctuary. Although it is also set somewhat back from the road, it is fairly visible because of the lack of trees between the church building and the road. The new sanctuary was dedicated this spring March 19th, 2000. The theological slant of the congregation in the past decade has been mostly humanist, with a sprinkling of Pagan, Buddhist, and other Eastern religious influences.

The fellowship had a part-time minister in the late 1960s and early 1970s, but when the congregation split over the Vietnam war, they returned to being a lay-led fellowship. In '88, they again hired a minister, and following steady membership growth through the next few years, they hired their first full-time minister in '91. They retained the name of "Fellowship" despite the change to professional ministerial leadership because they felt that "fellowship" more accurately reflected their identity as a congregation. The membership at BuxMont now numbers about 190, which is the result of annual growth of between 7 and 8% per year in the past decade. While the denomination as a whole is growing steadily, this church and the others presented in this paper have generally been experiencing more rapid growth. 43

⁴³ The total membership of the UUA has gone from 189,209 in 1989 to 215,624 in 1999, an increase of almost 14%. Annual growth for the denomination as a whole has been about 1-2% per year, since the early 1980s. (data from John Hurley, Director of Information, Unitarian Universalist Association).



Originally, when the fellowship was quite small, they met for worship in a large room in the basement of the old creamery, which now serves primarily as an RE classroom, and will be converted to an RE office/library when the new building is complete. In 1986, when the fellowship had about 105 members, and an RE enrollment of 42, the congregation built the old addition, which included the current sanctuary (which will be converted to use as social space) and some RE space downstairs. This space was adequate for the congregation's needs until around 1995, when they went to two services, because the congregation no longer all fit into the available worship and RE space. The Long Range Planning Committee had been formed in November of 1994, the architect was selected a little over three years later (January 1998) and construction began in summer/fall 1999. Here again the process was remarkably quick, in contrast to the prolonged planning and building process at Cherry Hill. Part of the reason for this is that the BuxMont building is much smaller, and the congregation is also still relatively small, despite its steady expansion.

In the process of planning and building the addition, the goal was to build and keep consensus. The architect, Daniella Voith, was seen as good at design, and at taking input from the congregation. She suggested hiring a construction manager, who oversaw the construction and guaranteed a maximum total price. Like the Media congregation in the 1950s, the church has an agreement to split any money saved from the projected construction with the contractor/manager. Ideally, the construction manager would have been hired at the same time as the architect, to save the maximum amount of money. As it was, the building committee at BuxMont found using the construction manager to be better for them than the process suggested by the UUA



manual, of hiring an architect and contractor. On the occasions when they have had problems in this process, the main issue has been a lack of teamwork.

As with the Media church, the building is designed and set on the site to allow for later expansion. Further expansion, to the originally planned 300-seat sanctuary, is contingent on the acquisition of more land for parking. The new sanctuary, which was to have been a connector to the larger sanctuary they envisioned, sits over four new RE rooms, plus an office and an RE worship-space, which may later be converted into a stairwell. The total of usable new space in the building is equally divided between worship space and RE/office space. The new RE space will just hold the number of children and youth currently enrolled in the RE program, but the old, more cramped space is also still available for use. The addition adds about five new usable entrances to the building, but the plan is to continue using the old entryway as the primary entrance, and perhaps use the direct entrance to the sanctuary for special events such as weddings.

The sanctuary itself, which seats 200, opens off of the old sanctuary space, now to be used primarily for social hour. The ceiling at the entrance to the sanctuary is extremely low, relative to the social space and the new sanctuary, which is an old Frank Lloyd Wright architectural technique, to create the sense of entering into a very open space. The worship space's large windows overlook the stream at the back of the building, and, unfortunately, a new mall through the trees across the stream (which should be less visible when the leaves are out in the summer). The congregation didn't want the window mullions included in the original architectural design, and preferred the less expensive and more modern open glass. There will be some glare from the sun



and the creek, and it has not yet been decided how to deal with this, but curtains are definitely not a popular suggestion.

The current minister customarily preaches from the corner of the room, and it is not clear what the final or usual arrangement will be in the new worship space, as the preacher will have to compete somewhat with the view. This congregation has never had pews, and does re-arrange the seating quite often. The open, light and airy worship space is devoid of any explicit or obvious religious symbols - any symbols which are moved in will likely be easily movable, keeping the space dedicated to worship, but flexible in the interpretation of worship.⁴⁴

Old sanctuary



⁴⁴ Sources of information for this section:

Site visit, 2/21/2000

Ed Schaller, chair of building committee, interview 2/21/2000

flyers and information on the construction printed for the congregation's reference website: http://www.buxmontuu.org/

Timeline and plan in Appendix C



Sacred Architecture

Building a church in the postmodern landscape may call for a reexamination of the basics of what constitutes sacred or religious space. In defiance the late-modern trend towards recommending multiple-use church buildings, having a dedicated religious space is a high priority of many congregations. Within the postmodern social and religious context, specifically religious architecture continues to be built. It may not be seen as the height of noteworthy architecture, but it still responds to the needs, desires, and constraints of its communities. Sacred architecture may be defined as, "structures intended for communal religious use." The basic test for whether or not a building qualifies as sacred architecture is primarily a question of its intended and current uses. For a further definition, it is where, "humans attempt to bring themselves closer to the divine by creating a special space to hold this powerful and precious contact." Therefore, the building's quality, as sacred architecture, could be judged by how well it facilitates the approach to, and contact with, the divine.

The concerns which predominate in the planning and building of new church buildings tend to be focused on the practical details of the process. The building's primary function is to house the religious congregation. The defining function of these buildings is worship, although education may be seen as just as important, and many other activities take place in churches as well. Designing church buildings now, especially among UUs, places many constraints on the architect. The architect and building committee must take into consideration the needs, desires, and constant stream of opinions from the congregation. The creative freedom of the architect may be greater,

⁴⁵ Thomas Barrie, Spiritual Path, Sacred Place: Myth, Ritual and Meaning in Architecture (Boston: Shambhala, 1996), 1.



these days, in other kinds of construction. The tight constraints of budget as well as the congregation's strongly voiced sense of what the building should be like can be quite confining. The church building must accomplish several things. First, it must serve the practical needs of the congregation for space, etc., within the constraints of the congregation's budget. Second, it should provide a worship space which works well with the congregation's liturgical practice, which reflects the congregation's theological orientation, as well as accommodating the arrangement and movement of people during the worship service or liturgy.

The building will also serve as a kind of announcement to the outside world, and the congregation's members, of what the church is about. It is the first thing which a visitor to the church or passerby encounters on an actual visit to the church. Websites and phone calls for information are other important points of initial contact, but often photos of the buildings are also prominently placed on the website. Although the building is a signature, it should not be chained too tightly to a particular theological viewpoint. Leaving out symbols which have traditionally had a more rigid theological connotations, such as crosses and steeples, lends a flexibility to the meaning of the religious building. At the same time, the congregation generally wants its building to communicate that it is a church, not a house, school, commercial building, etc. The church building serves the dual functions of providing for the congregation's physical needs and communicating what the congregation is about.

UU churches share, to a certain extent, in the heritage of Puritan meeting houses.

The members generally do not want a building that looks too "churchy." At the same time, the desire to have a dedicated worship space which holds the whole congregation

⁴⁶ Caroline Humphrey and Piers Vitebsky, Sacred Architecture (Boston: Little, Brown and Co.,



usually brings with it a desire to have a space which feels like worship space. In the American context, with congregations whose members often have a background of worshipping in traditional church buildings, the feel of sacred space can be communicated by a variety of methods which don't seem to impose a particular theological stance on the average UU. First, many worship spaces have high ceilings, often with open beams. The placement of windows near the peak of the roof brings in natural light from above. The fact that large volume and clear light communicate a sense of sacred space to UU congregations is nonetheless culturally imbedded, and partakes in a certain Puritan heritage. Volume and light may communicate the importance of reason and verbal communication, but cramped spaces and muted light can also communicate a sense of sacred space, as in many Hindu temples and some chapels.



Space and Time

Religious space is set apart in both space and time. Just as there are places of worship, there are times of worship. For the most part, the traditional times of worship conform to a pre-modern, cyclical pattern, in which the same observations recur at well-defined intervals. Some examples of this are weekly religious worship, most often on Sunday mornings in the Protestant Christian context, seasonal celebrations (some of which are carried over from earlier forms of Christianity into Unitarian Universalism), and life-cycle rituals (child dedications, coming of age, marriage, funerals).

Modernism, which brought with it an overwhelming drive towards linear time and a sense of progress, did little to change the time-pattern of religious observances. While the clockwork world insisted on an unprecedented regularity, with less room for local variation, its main impact on cyclical ritual patterns was to make them incidental to the forward march of time, and less central to the communal life of an increasingly secular society (although secular society also has its regular rituals). In the 20th century, the religious diversity of small geographical areas and the amount of information available to individuals increased dramatically. A wider range of alternatives, and secularization of society as a whole, decreased the centrality of attendance at mainstream churches in many Americans' lives. This contributed to decreasing church attendance in traditional denominations.

Time is at least as fundamental to the religious structuring of life as having dedicated religious places is. The changing experience of time will necessarily impact the ritual lives of communities. Although both pre-modern and modern understandings of time have continued validity, the post-modern experience of time is different yet again, and will have a profound effect on the ritual life of religious



communities. Jenck's summary of the evolution of our understandings of time characterizes pre-modern (up to 1450) time as "Cyclical, slow-changing, reversible time" with "space-time separation." In contrast, Modern time (1450-1960) is "Linear, sequential & progressive," with "space time compression." The post-modern experience of time is "Cyclical & Linear, fast-changing," and is characterized by "space-time implosion." A re-adjustment of our ritual way of relating to time should follow naturally from our changing experience of time, but requires more creative effort than continuing in the well-established patterns which individuals and communities are emotionally attached to. This creative effort has begun, but is still in its infancy within the UU movement, as far as I can tell.

There are two ways in which the UU churches I looked at have accommodated the faster-changing times, and dealt with the space-time implosion. The first is the classic late-modern church architectural approach of replacing fixed pews with flexible seating. This allows the community to use the worship space for a wider variety of activities, although in all of the churches I visited those I interviewed said that having a dedicated worship space was a priority. The second, less popular strategy, is to move from having a Sunday morning service to having meetings for worship at other times. This has been adopted with the institution of Sunday evening services at the Main Line Unitarian Church, which has reached a size at which gathering the whole congregation at one service is impractical. The reluctance of smaller churches to deal with increasing membership by having multiple worship meetings had to do with a desire to have the whole community together. Therefore, the new building often followed a few years after moving to two services because of space constraints.

⁴⁷ Jencks, chart, page 56.



Conclusions

Origins and process

The original church buildings were, in most of these cases, built or bought by the congregation in the late 1950s (the exception being Bedford). In all cases, the planning and building process spanned many years, but the overall length of the process seemed to be in inverse proportion to the church's financial resources. The construction itself, in particular, can be speeded up considerably by a larger amount of money. The slowest process, among these churches, appears to have been at Cherry Hill, which moved from using an architect as the designer to a more collaborative design-build process, in which the various contractors have more responsibility and power to design the parts of the building that they are working on. All of these churches employed architects from outside the congregation, although in the case of BuxMont there are two architects in the congregation. Construction at BuxMont seems to have progressed especially quickly, following a typically long planning process, and is documented in detail on the congregation's website. The length and stress of the process contributes to the pattern that, in nearly all of these cases, the minister of the church will leave during or immediately after construction. The transition into a new building is most often also marked by a major turnover in leadership at various levels of the church.

All of these churches had informative and well organized websites, with links to the UUA main webpages, and some even had their own domain names. The web is increasingly important to people who are looking for churches, and people who are looking for a church in their area through the UUA website will generally look first (or only) at those churches which have websites. All of the churches that I looked at in this study are growing congregations in variously affluent suburbs. The precise location of



the church building, in terms of visibility to passers by, seemed to be fairly unimportant in terms of the congregation's growth. One possible concern is that many of them are not easily accessible by public transportation - this restricts access to the actual church to those who have cars, which leaves out people with lower incomes who rely primarily on public transportation, and is also not the most ecologically responsible thing. This is a side-effect of the fact that most of these properties were acquired in the 1950s, with expansion of suburbs, and is unlikely to change except by a broader social movement to enhance public transport.

Another problem is the trade-off between short-term and long-term costs. It is expensive to build churches, especially because, as public buildings, they must conform to more rigid building codes than private homes. This includes areas such as accessibility and fire safety, which are certainly important, but cannot, legally, be put off until a later time when more money might become available. In the 1950s, when their original, award-winning but problematic building was put up, the Media church made a deal with the contractor to split any money left over from the building process. This amounted to \$12,000 a considerable sum in 1950s dollars. Unfortunately, cutting corners had left the congregation with a leaking roof, a stinking bathroom, and an inaccessible utility room. As a result, they chose to invest more in the new building, putting more emphasis on durability than immediate cost. Meanwhile, the BuxMont fellowship has a similar deal with the contractor to split money saved. However, their new building is structurally simpler than the older part of the Media church, so it is possible that there will be fewer problems.

Programming Priorities: Religious Education and Worship Space



The most commonly cited reason for building was a need for more RE space, with improvement and expansion of the worship space as another important priority. In the case of the Bedford church, the new construction has been entirely in the RE and administrative area (plus a new fellowship hall), while relatively minor renovations are being made to the sanctuary. Similarly, the original plan at Cherry Hill had been to build new RE space, and make only minor renovations to the old Fellowship Hall. A fire which destroyed the Fellowship Hall necessitated the building of a new worship space. At both Cherry Hill and Media, the new worship space is joined by a fellowship and multi-purpose room, to rent out to other groups which need space. This replaces a system in which the sanctuary was the only large space available to rent to outside groups, an idea which is espoused in Tired Dragons and First Impressions. A problem with having only one space for all of these functions is that it resulted in what I might call furniture-moving fatigue. Every time the space was rented out, it had to be rearranged, and the outside group often hung things on the walls which sometimes had to be left up, and adversely impacted the atmosphere of the worship space. Also, despite the priority of having movable seating, some of the congregations rarely moved it around at all. Many congregations want a worship space which had the feel of sacred space, and that is often not enhanced by using it for a wide range of meetings, classes, and performances.

Religious Education is becoming increasingly important in terms of drawing people to the church and keeping them there. Many "young families" come to church primarily for the educational component for the children, as well as for community and spiritual reasons. Given that churches are devoting more space and resources to RE, you would think they would move it out of the basement, but this is not the case. While



the RE spaces are almost always a dramatic improvement over what had been available, for the most part they are still kept to the back of the church and in the basement.

Again, the noteworthy exception is the Main Line church, in which the RE building faces the road and forms the facade of the church, while the less elaborate sanctuary is one of two buildings at the back. If churches are arranged according to their main focus, this arrangement is likely to become more common, although many congregations will of course retain a primary emphasis on worship.

Symbolism of and in the Sanctuary

Symbolism or the lack thereof was a major concern in constructing worship space. The challenge seems to have been to create a "non-churchy" church, but one that is still definitely a house of worship. At the same time, there is also the phenomenon of the house-like church, as seen in the Main Line church and the UU Meetinghouse in Manchester, Connecticut,⁴⁸ but mostly these congregations seem to be striving for a kind of church building which is clear of closely defined symbolism, but also participates in the Western traditions of corporate worship space. That is, they are still much more closely related to a Puritan meeting house than to a Zen temple, despite the fact that they probably more are often used for Zen meditation than Bible-reading.

These churches sometimes use alternatives to steeples, as a way to set the church apart from other types of buildings. The light-box at Media and the tower at Ft.

Lauderdale are good examples of this, but there is no steeple-like structure on the Cherry Hill, Main Lint, or BuxMont buildings. Some other strategies to create a feeling of worship space have been high ceilings, lots of light, and a general sense of openness.



These distinguish the dedicated worship space from the classrooms and administrative areas, in most cases. A possible exception to this is the Main Line church, where the most open and light-filled space is the stairwell connecting the various floors of the front, all new, building. Without exception, among these churches, the windows are made of clear glass and generally provide a view onto a scene of (more or less controlled) natural beauty, including woods, the stream at Buxmont, the rock garden in Media, the arboretum at Cherry Hill. This successfully re-emphasizes the congregations' orientation towards this world, and reverence for nature.

The task of creating sacred space which can be recognized as such but does not feel churchy or theologically confining contains several challenges. First, there is the standard challenge of space, time, and money. Second, there are organizational and interpersonal tensions which tend to come to the forefront in a major project like creating a building. Third, if the congregations continue to grow at the current rates, the new space will not suffice for very long. Finally, there are the concerns as to the religious implications of the space itself.

The question of the meaning of the space is usually eclipsed by practical concerns once the building project is underway. Where congregations struggled with meanings implied by architectural features, they tended to focus on *not* being something else, especially in wanting to avoid images that would cast the congregation as Christian, which for the most part they are not. What the worship spaces do usually retain are typically European-North American notions of what constitutes a beautiful space, most often strongly influenced by modernism.

⁴⁸ Jean L. Whalstrom, "Between the Worlds: Sacred Space in Unitarian Universalist Worship and Ministry," (M. Div. senior paper, Harvard Divinity School, 1992), 22-32.



In the future, UU churches are likely to be more far-flung types of sanctuary, which, while remaining flexible, reflect a more widely informed and eclectic postmodern aesthetic sense. These might include church buildings with more eastern influence and other explorations of modern architecture. The "religious home" type of church building, which is constructed to resemble a house in some respects, seems most able to adapt authentically to an increasing emphasis on education and smaller group gatherings within the church.



Appendix A: Interview Plan

date of building
planing begun
construction started
Completion

Practical constraints (climate, budget, zoning, etc.) surrounding architectural context

Description of the building

type/style Materials drawings/plan photos

Description of the community (minister, administrator, members of congregation)

Size

general theological orientation

when and how is the building used

church community: Sunday mornings, adult RE, activities outside groups, i.e., concerts, weddings, daycare, etc.

Description of the process

questions for building committee members and maybe the minister:

Why did you decide you needed a new building?

What were the primary concerns for you?

How do you feel the congregational community is...

expressed in the building?

Shaped by the building?

What other groups use this building?

Were they important in the design process?

Do you like it? Does it do what you wanted it to?

What have the most important complaints been since completion?

What were the predominant complaints during the process?

Some questions for the architect(s):

Do you do a lot of churches?

if so, what is different about doing a UU church?

What specific design elements did the congregation determine?

(i.e., arrangement of worship space)

What do you know about the congregation's mission, theology, and self-image?

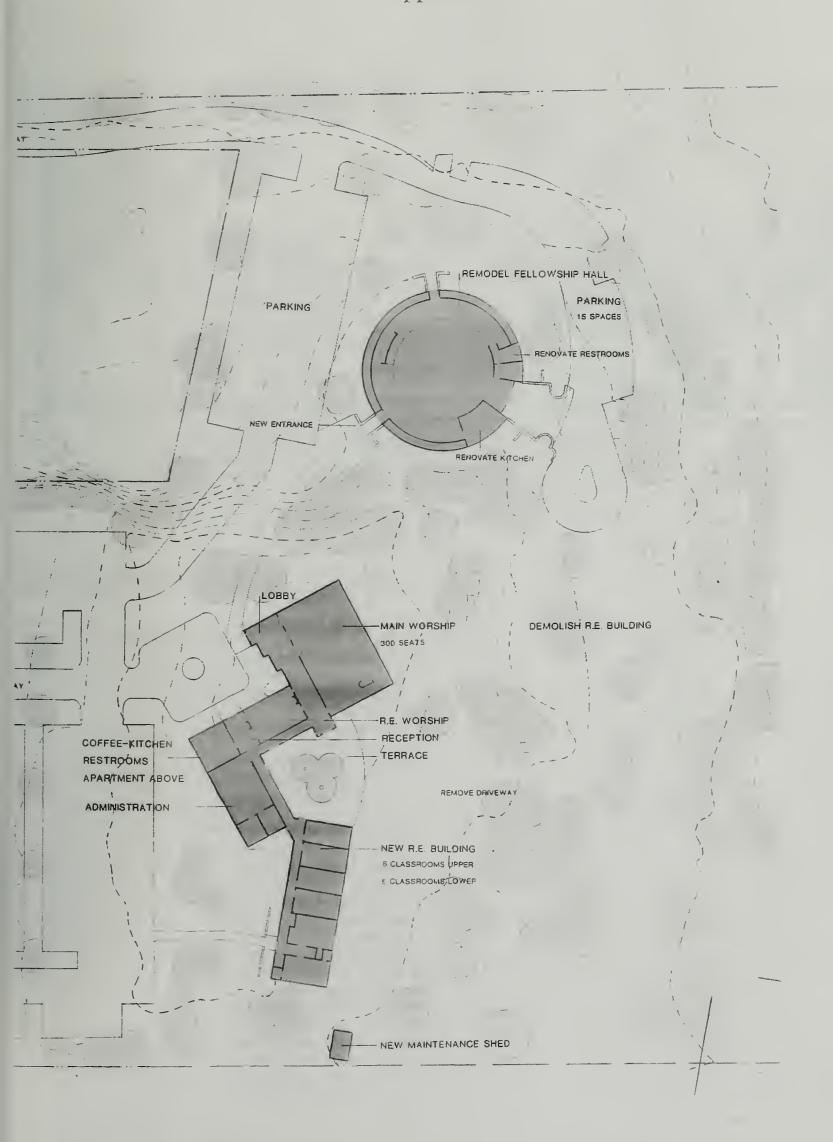
How did that influence the design of the church?

What was the most exciting thing about this project?

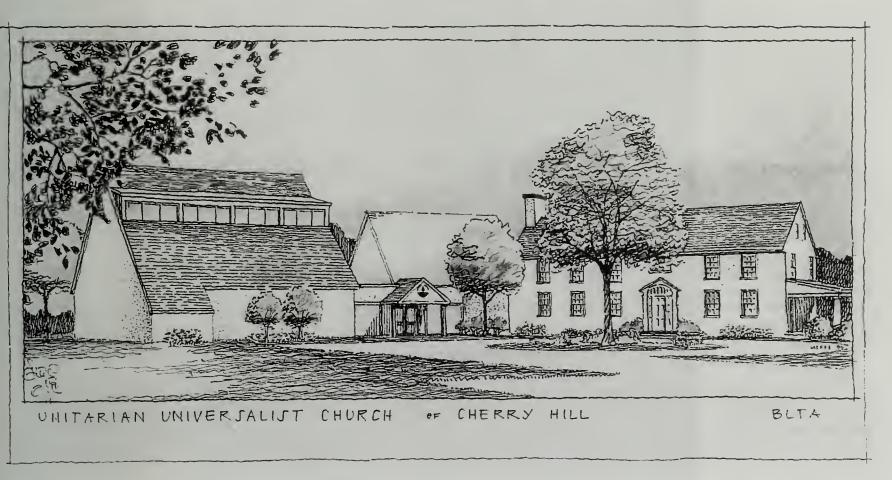
What was most frustrating?



Appendix B-1







Church/School Expansion Cherry Hill, New Jersey

Client: Unitarian Church in Cherry Hill BLT led the congregation through a master planning process to define how to accommodate expansion on their 14-acre site. The resulting design proposes to build a new sanctuary space to seat 300 people and related religious education and reception spaces. The new building connects to an 18th century farmhouse which is being renovated to house the administration offices and caretaker's apartment.

The new sanctuary, religious education wing, entry pavilion and existing historic house are set in a village-like cluster centered on an indoor commons area. The exterior of the new building is contemporary in design and scaled to harmonize with the existing structures. The interior of the sanctuary features continuous clerestory windows which bring diffuse northern light and broad expanses of windows to the south, connecting the space to the site's natural beauty.



Appendix B-3







Fire damaged Sanctuary

MAIN LINE UNITARIAN CHURCH

New Religious Education Facility & Restoration of Worship Space Devon, Pennsylvania

Client:

Main Line Unitarian Church

Just after completion of documentation for renovations and expansion of existing church facilities, a fire gutted the sanctuary and major portions of supporting religious education facilities, necessitating extensive planning and design changes to meet the Congregation's original program requirements.

The new plan included restoration of the fire-damaged sanctuary and doubling its capacity, remodelling of the gutted remains of the religious education wing to serve as a chapel, and construction of a new 12,000 nsf building to accommodate educational, social, and support spaces.

The new building has a coffee hour room, kitchen, library and administrative suite on the ground floor, and 12 classrooms above. It is connected to the remodelled worship spaces by a grand stair hall.

Comprehensive redesign of the site to expand parking capacity completes the project to date.





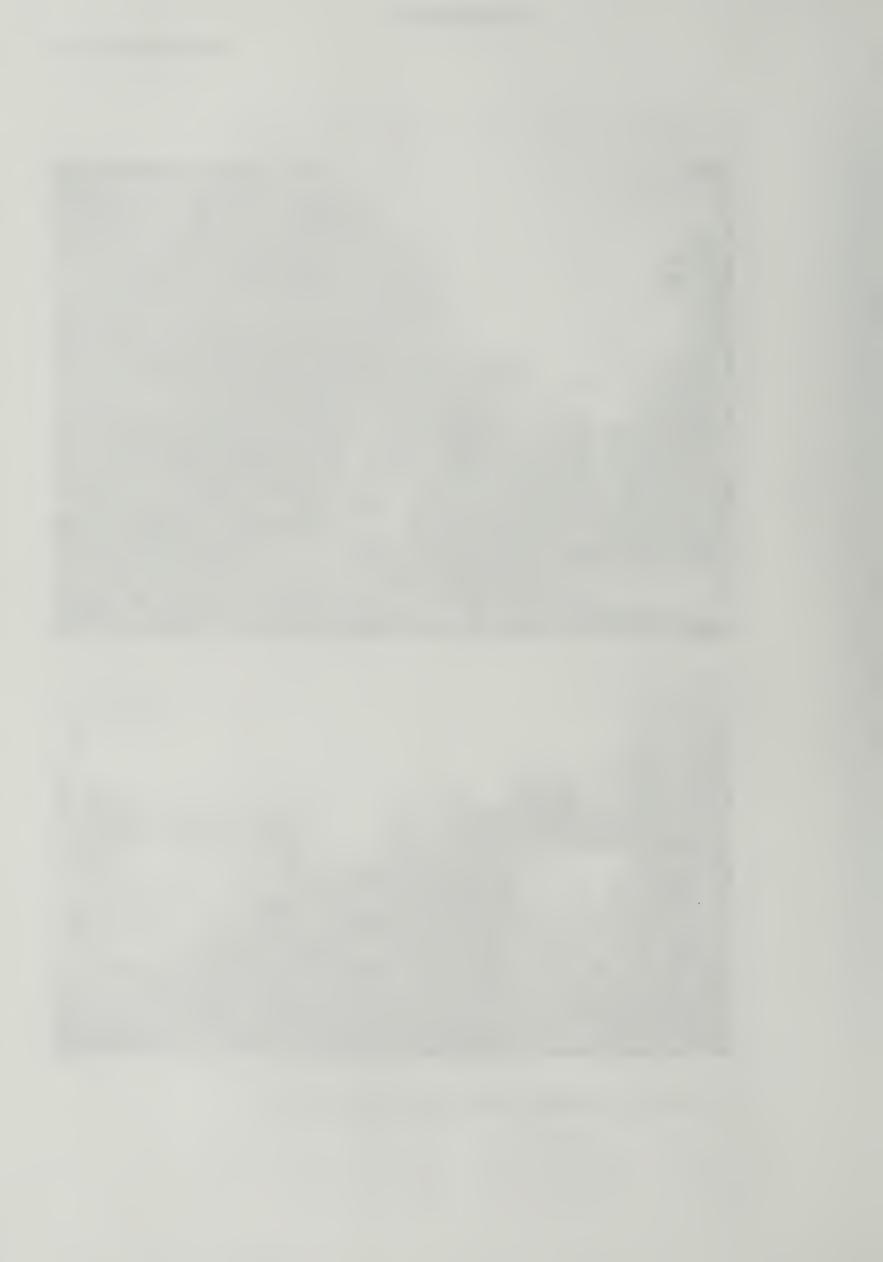








New sanctuary, support spaces and chapel (top) arise from the ruins (bottom)









New Church Fort Lauderdale, Florida

Client: Unitarian-Universalist Church of Fort Lauderdale Roderick Wolfson designed this church (while with Saez/Pacetti) to embody the values of the congregation. They wanted their new home to have an image that was religious yet distinctive, and to portray a harmonious relationship with nature at a very modest cost. The 9,000 square foot building is sensitively sited to enjoy the beautiful cypress trees that were on the four-acre lot and to use the sun to the best advantage.

The church has a crisp modern image highlighted by symbolic use of the circle. Inside, the meeting room is a simple, peaceful space connected to the surrounding natural landscape with generous glazing. As it dances across the front wall behind the pulpit, natural daylight animates and enlivens the room.



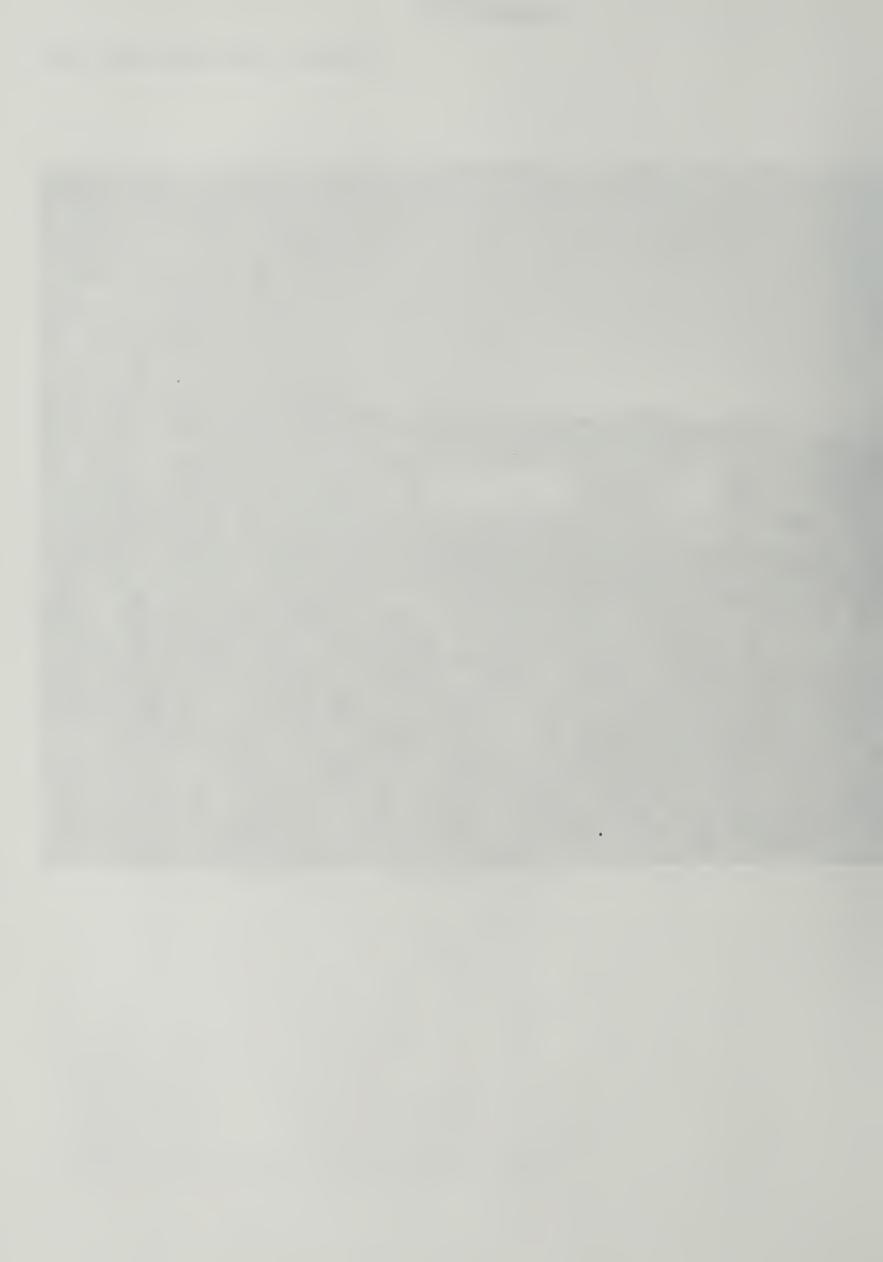
Unitarian-Universalist Church of Fort Lauderdale





Unitarian-Universalist Fellowship of Centre County





Appendix B-10

UNITARIANUNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP OF CENTRE COUNTY

Church & Education Building State College, Pennsylvania

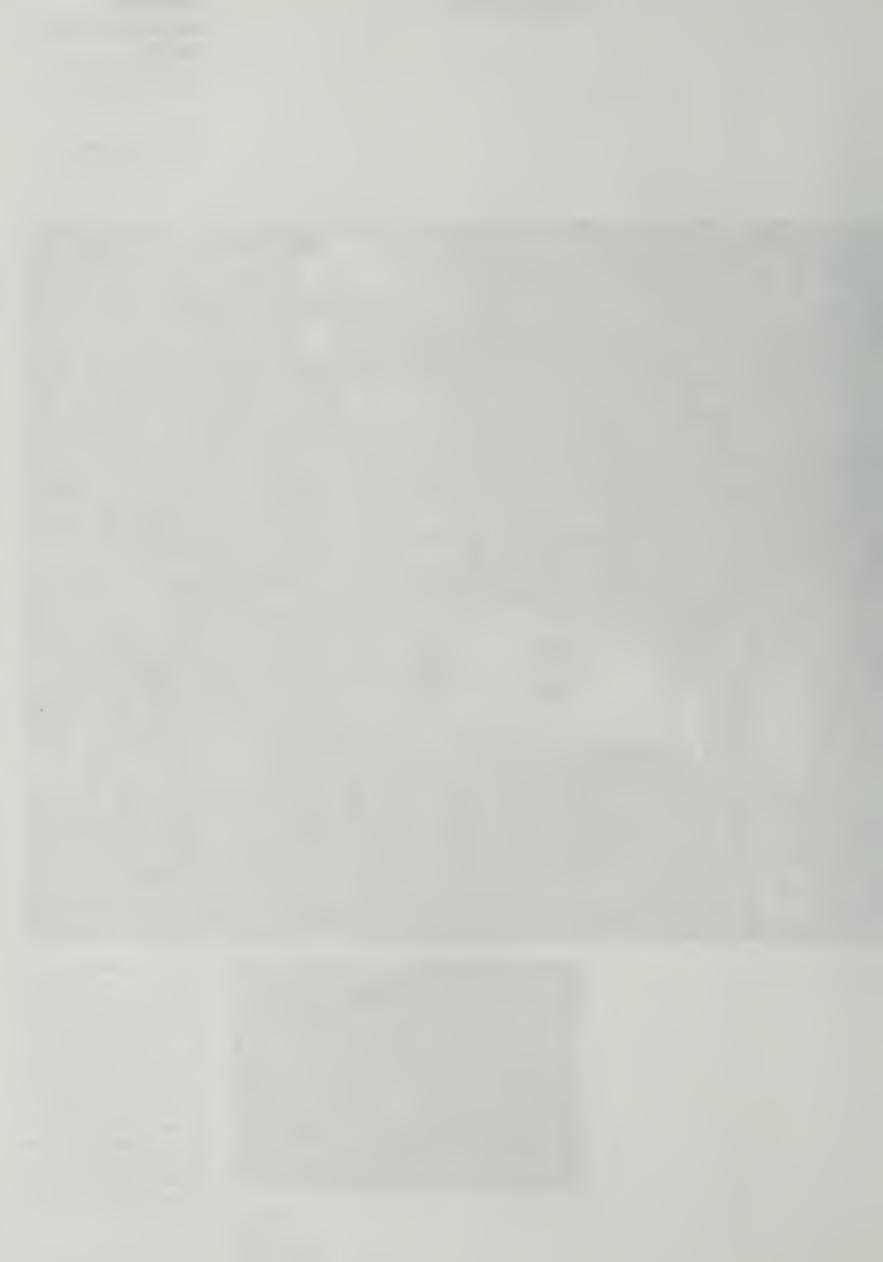
Client:

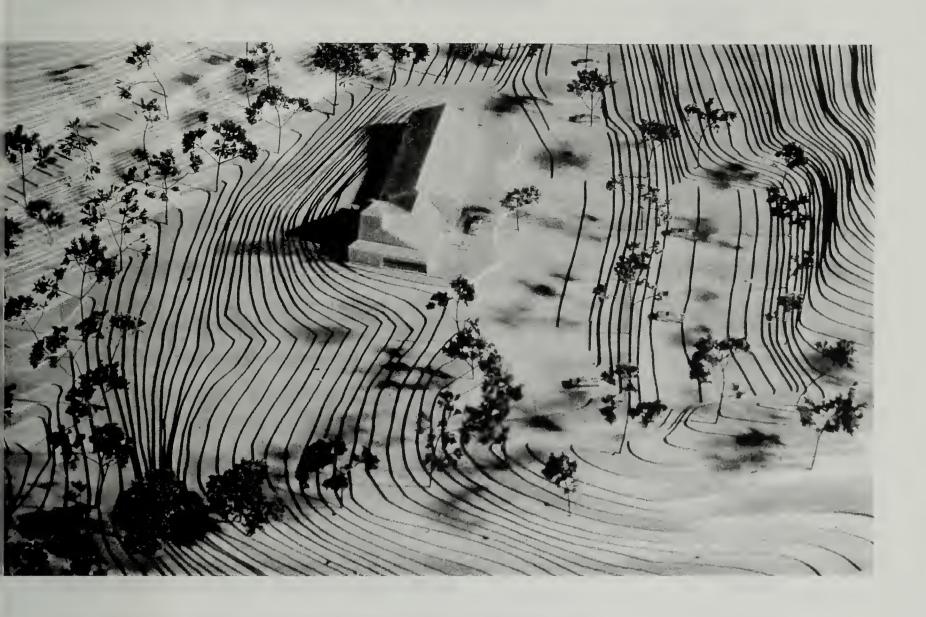
Unitarian-Universalist Fellowship of Centre County





BOWER LEWIS THROWER Clad in weathered cedar shingles with crisp white trim, the new religious home for the Unitarian-Universalist Fellowship of Centre County sits on the crest of a hill with panoramic views of the surrounding natural landscape. Its 200-seat sanctuary is a lofty lightfilled space with pitched ceiling, roof trusses, millwork and flooring of natural wood. Support areas include a social room, classrooms, kitchen and offices.





New Church & Church School West Chester, Pennsylvania

Client: Unitarian Fellowship of West Chester Preliminary design has been completed for a new church for a small congregation in West Chester, Pennsylvania.

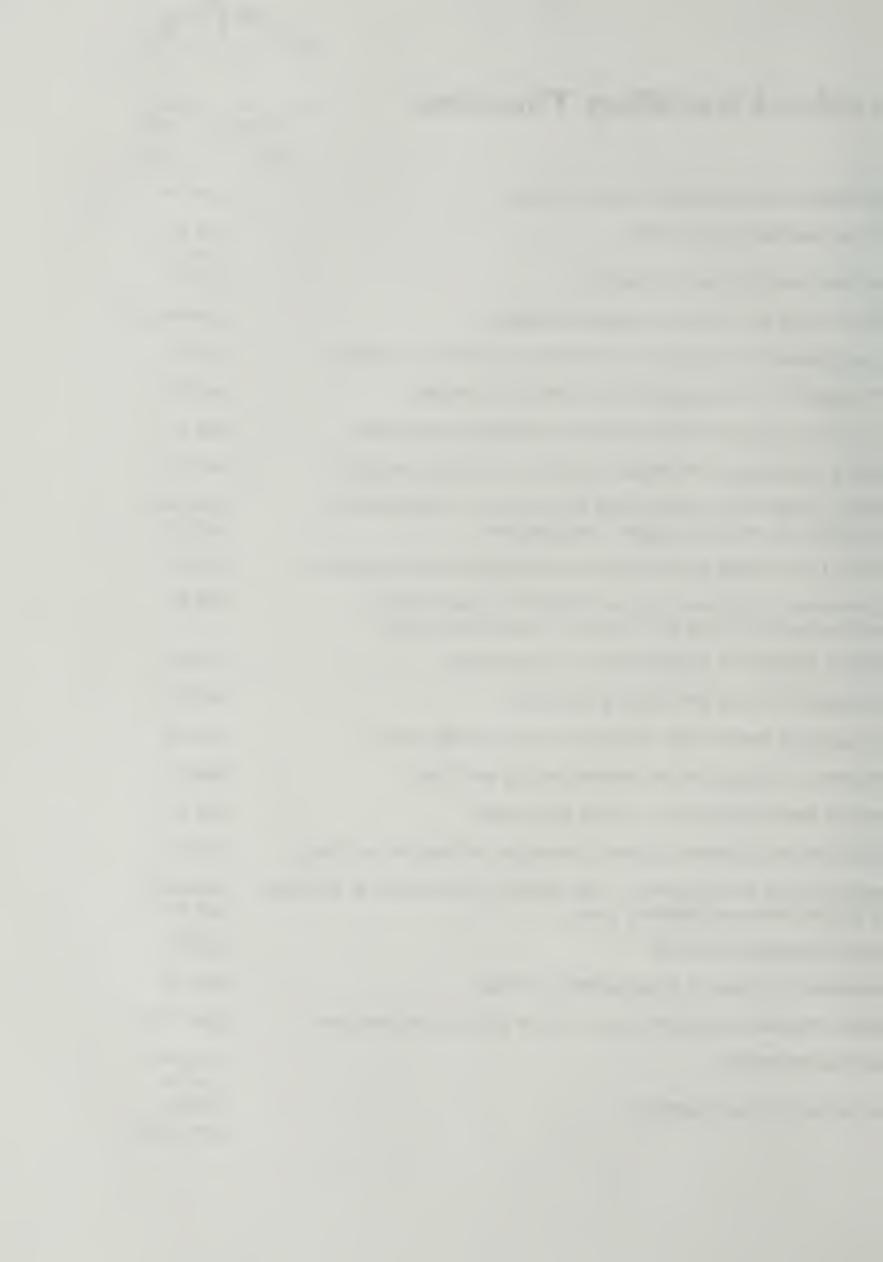
The main worship space — intended to seat 200 initially, but to expand to 400 in the future — is designed to look out over a beautiful rolling meadow to the woods beyond. In addition to the 6,000 square foot church building, the six acre site accommodates parking for 60 automobiles. Construction is scheduled to begin in the Fall of 1993.

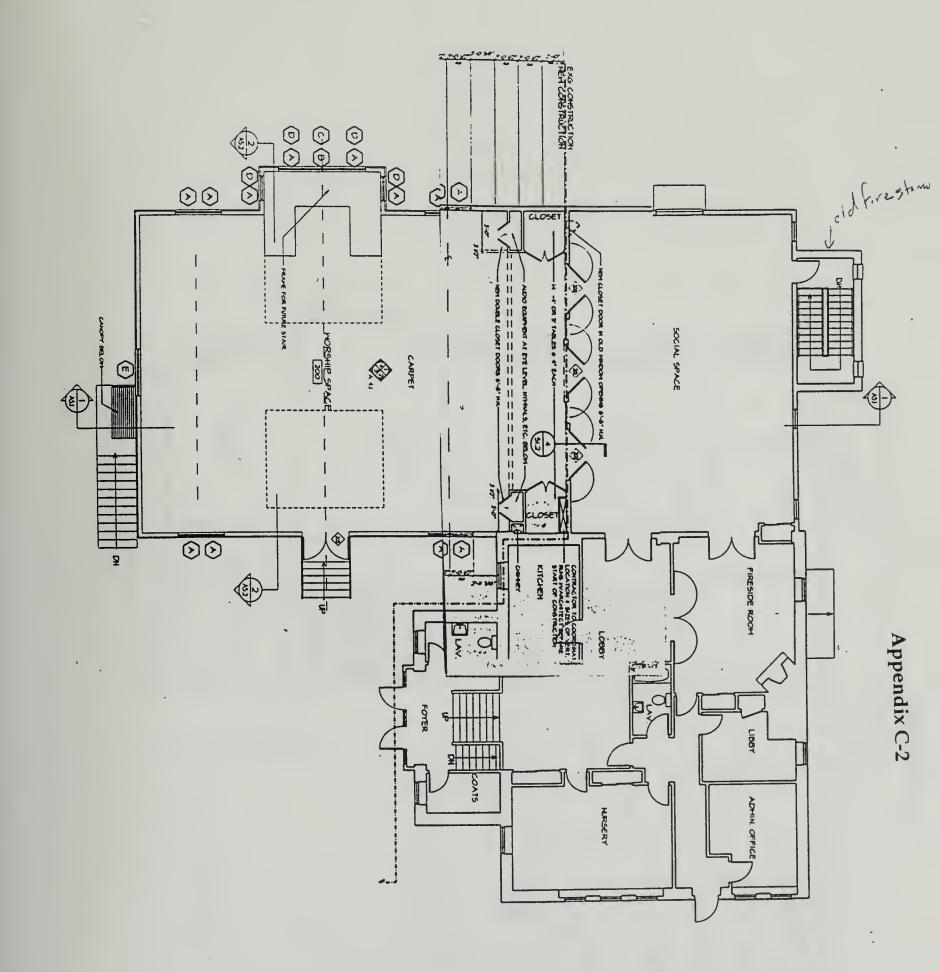


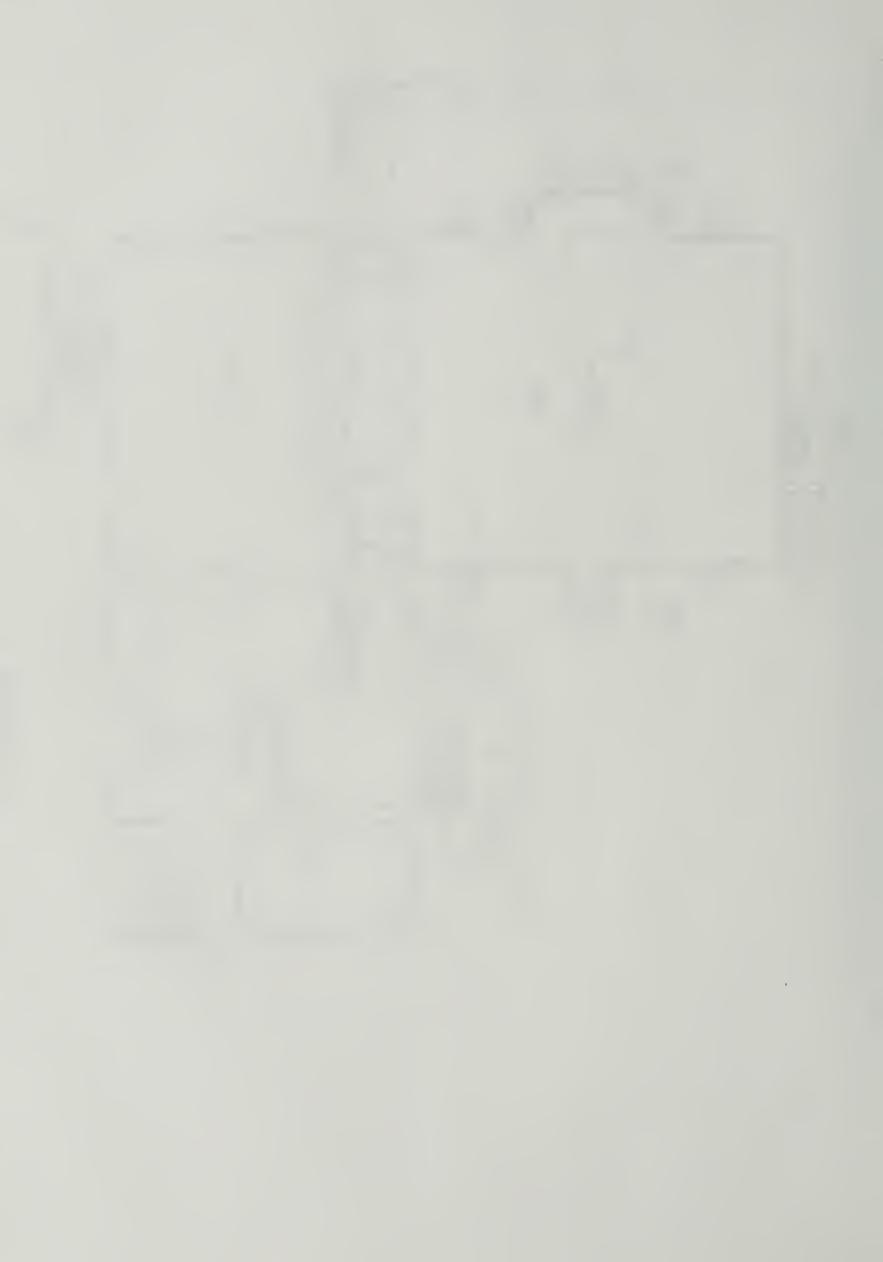
BuxMont Building Timeline

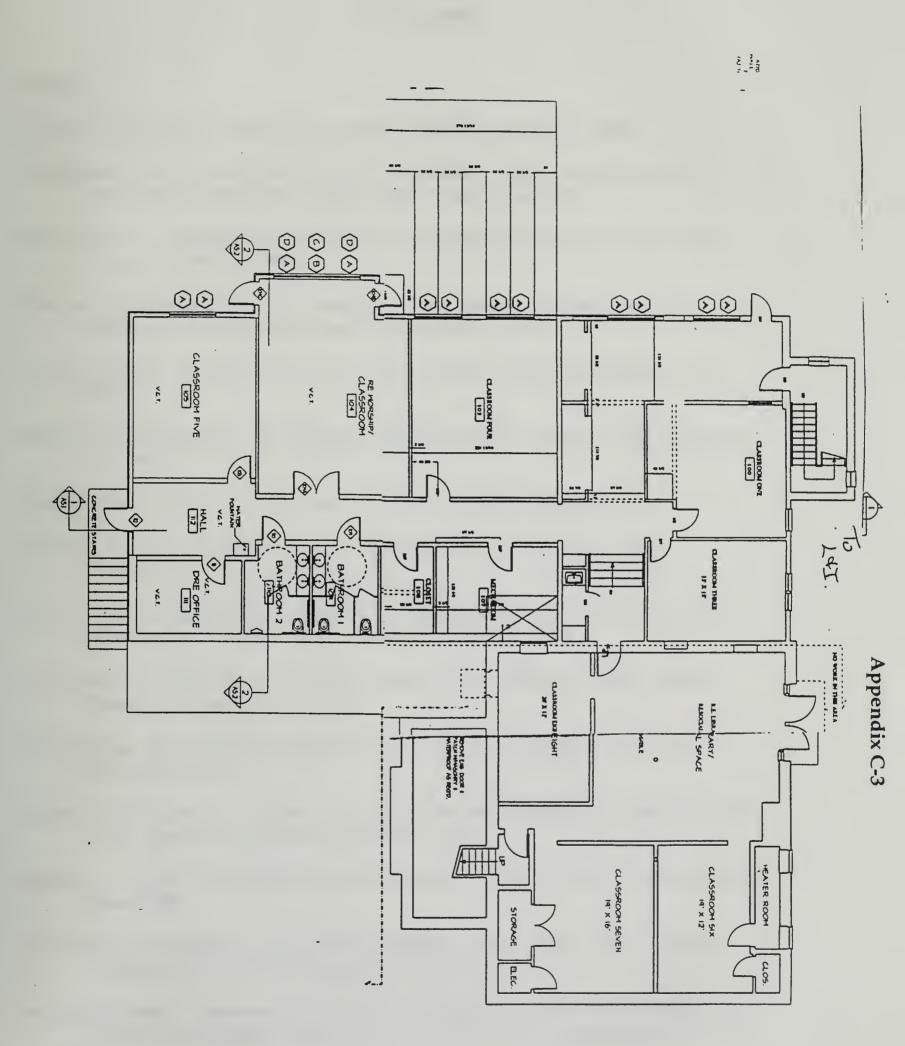


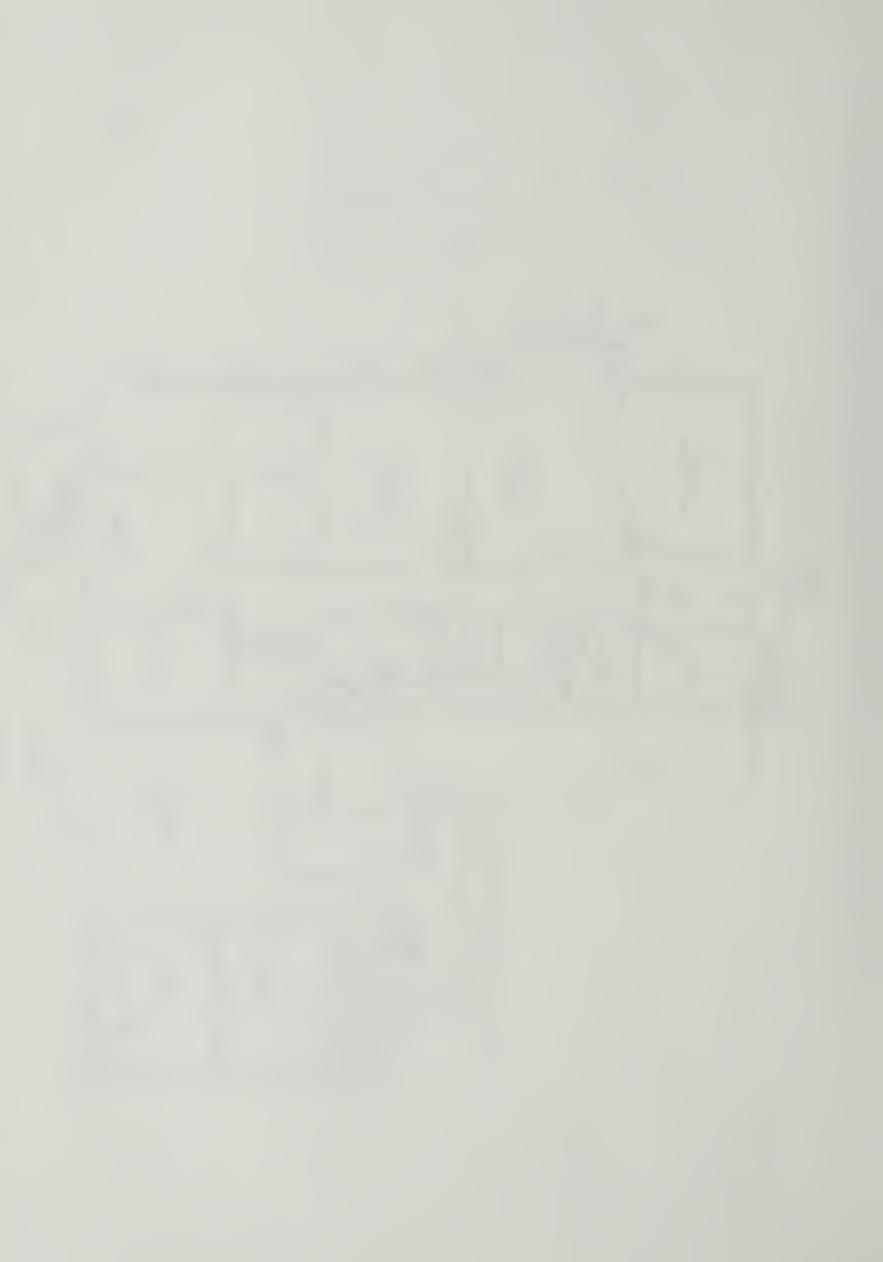
Long Range Planning Committee formed	Nov 94
LRPC organizes, begins work	Dec 94
Congregational Vision Workshop	– Sep 95 Oct 95
Focus groups on Congregational priorities	Summer 96
Congregational Workshop for Prioritizing and Goal Setting	Oct 96
LRPC report to Congregation on Workshop results	Dec 96
Congregation approves formation of Building Committee	May 97
Building Committee information meeting with Congregation	Jun 97
Building Committee gathers info from other congregations, consultants, develops plans and timeline	Summer/ Fall 97
Building Committee information meetings with Congregation	Nov 97
Congregation approves approx. \$10,000 for preliminary architectural studies and financial feasibility study	Dec 97
Architect selected & presented to Congregation	Jan 98
Congregation votes on building priorities	Feb 98
Congregation meets with architect to give design input	Feb 98
Preliminary design concept developed by architect	Mar 98
Financial feasibility study by UUA consultant	Apr 98
Congregational vote on Capital Campaign to finance building	May 98
Congregational focus groups with Building Committee & architect to further develop building plans	Summer/ Fall 98
Capital Campaign Kick-Off	Fall 98
Congregation votes on final building design	Dec 98
Working drawing completed, put out for bids by contractors	Spring 99
Construction begins First service in new building	Summer/ Fall 99 Winter/ Spring 00











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Cherry Hill: http://www.synergration.com/uucinch/

Main Line: http://www.libertynet.org/devonuu/

Delaware County: http://www.uucdc.org/

BuxMont: http://www.buxmontuu.org/

Unitarian Universalist Association: http://www.uua.org/

http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/GS99/trend (statistics on religious attendance and preference, 1972 - 1996)

Interviews:

Bedford:

Building committee: Art Smith (conversation, 2/13/2000) Church Administrator: Lindy Evans (conversations 2/10 and 3/14/2000) Former member of Sanctuary Committee, Karen Lynch Frederick, 2/13

Cherry Hill:

Administrator: Kathy (phone conversation, 2/3/00)
Amy Miller, Chair, Construction task force (phone conversation, 2/3/00)
Gordon Marshal, Project Manager representing the church
Architect(s): Dave Donachy, Architect, Morristown, NJ
Roderick Wolfson, former architect, of Bower Lewis and Thrower
(all interviewed 2/19/2000)

Main Line:

Roderick Wolfson, architect, (interviewed 2/19/2000)

Media:

Susan Adnopoz, 2/20/2000 (Sunday) also some comments from other members following the church service. Phone conversations with church administrator.

Buxmont:

Ed Schaller, chair of building committee, interview 2/21/2000 Also leaflets provided for the congregation's information.



John Hurley, Director of Information, UUA email, 2/22/2000 (UUA stats)

Edwin Lynn, conversation, October 1999

Site Visits:

Bedford: 2/13/2000

First Parish Bedford 75 The Great Road Bedford, MA

Cherry Hill: 2/18/2000

Unitarian Universalist Church 2916 Chapel Ave. Cherry Hill, NJ 08002

Main Line: 2/19/2000

Main Line Unitarian Church 816 Valley Forge Road Devon, PA 19333-1825

Media: 2/20/2000

Unitarian Universalist Church of Delaware County

145 W. Rose Tree Road

Media, PA 19063

BuxMont: 2/21/2000

BuxMont UU Fellowship

2040 Street Rd. Warrington, PA





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